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THE HOLY MASS

THE HOLY MASS

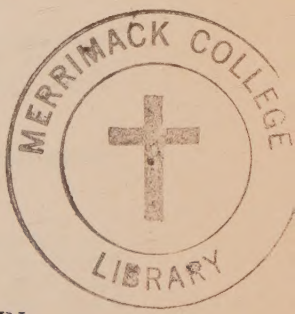
NOTES ON THE LITURGY

By

Very Rev. EUGENE VANDEUR, D.D., O.S.B.

FIFTH AND REVISED EDITION

"Hoc facite in meam commemorationem"
(Do this for a commemoration of Me)
ST. LUKE XXII. 19.



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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	vii
INTRODUCTORY NOTES	1
1. Sacrifice	1
2. The Church	5
3. The Altar	8
4. The Altar Linen	10
5. The Church Candle	12
6. The Incense	15
7. The Priest, Deacon and Subdeacon	16
8. The Sacerdotal Vestments	20
9. The Liturgical Colours	29
10. Plain-Song	31
11. The Blessing and Sprinkling of Water on Sundays	33
A.—The Blessing of Water	33
B.—The Asperges	35

THE HOLY MASS

NOTES ON THE LITURGY	37
1. The Mass in General	37
2. Parts of the Mass	42
THE ORDINARY OF THE MASS	45
THE PREPARATION	46

The Prayers at the Foot of the Altar, p. 46—The *Introibo* and the Psalm *Judica me*, p. 47—The *Adjutorium nostrum*, p. 52—The *Confiteor*, p. 52—The *Aufer a nobis* and the *Oramus te*, p. 57.

PART ONE: MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS: INSTRUCTION

FROM THE INTROIT TO THE OFFERTORY	61

The Incensing of the Altar, p. 62—The Introit, p. 65—The *Kyrie eleison*, p. 67—The *Gloria in excelsis*, p. 70—The Collect, p. 75—The Epistle, p. 79—The Gradual, *Alleluia* and Tract, p. 82—The Gospel, p. 86—The *Credo*, p. 98.

Page

PART TWO: THE MASS OF THE FAITHFUL: SACRIFICE

INTRODUCTORY 103

§ 1. PREPARATION FOR THE OBLATION OF THE VICTIM

FROM THE OFFERTORY TO THE PREFACE 107

The *Oremus*, p. 108—The Offertory, p. 109—Prayers at the Offertory, p. 113—The Incensing of the Altar, p. 127—The *Lavabo*, p. 130—The *Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas*, p. 133—The *Orate Fratres*, p. 136—The Secret, p. 138.

§ 2. THE OBLATION OF THE VICTIM

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE PATER NOSTER 140

The Preface, p. 144—The *Sanctus*, p. 149—The *Canon*, p. 151—The *Te Igitur*, p. 157—*Memento* of the Living, p. 163—The *Communicantes*, p. 167—The *Hanc igitur*, p. 171—The *Quam oblationem*, p. 174—The Holy Sacrifice, p. 176—After the Consecration, p. 192—The *Unde et Memores*, p. 194—The *Supra quae*, p. 201—The *Supplices te rogamus*, p. 302—Commemoration of the Dead, p. 207—The *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, p. 210—The *Per quem haec omnia*, p. 211—The *Per ipsum*, p. 215.

§ 3. COMMUNION, OR UNION WITH THE SACRIFICE

FROM THE PATER NOSTER TO THE LAST GOSPEL 219

The *Pater Noster*, p. 220—The *Libera nos*, p. 225—The Breaking of the Host, p. 228—The *Agnus Dei*, p. 238—The Prayer before the Kiss of Peace, p. 240—Prayers before the Communion, p. 244—The Communion, p. 247—The Ablutions, p. 255—The Communion Antiphon, p. 258—The Post-Communion, p. 259—The *Ite Missa est*, p. 261—The *Placeat*, p. 264—The Blessing, p. 266—The Last Gospel, p. 267.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 271

INTRODUCTION

On every page of this small book, theology, history and symbolism point to one practical consideration. It is this: *there is no more important work than Holy Mass; that is why we must take part in it more fervently and more often.*

One of the Secret prayers in the Missal asks God to enable us to keep this resolution:

Concede nobis, quæsumus, Domine, hæc digne frequentare mysteria: quia quoties hujus hostiæ commemorationem celebretur, opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur.[1]

Grant, we pray Thee, Lord, that we may worthily and often take part in these rites, for each and every offering of this memorial sacrifice carries on the work of our redemption.

That is a wonderful prayer and a complete theological synthesis of the "mystery of faith." We make it our own on behalf of all those who are good enough to follow us in the study of these *Notes* which we intend as an authentic commentary on this prayer.

There is no greater action than Holy Mass.[2] Every time it is celebrated it carries on the work of our redemption: *opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur.*

Do we always remember this, do we think of it sufficiently? As the bell rings every morning summoning us to holy Mass, to *the work of our redemption*, do we think of the sublime and ineffable mystery that God's minister is about to renew on the altar? Are we truly convinced

[1] *Secret prayer*, Mass of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

[2] "The Mass is an act of the highest possible contemplation." St. Vincent Ferrer, Sermon for the Saturday after the Sunday *Oculi* (IIIrd Lent).

that at holy Mass we are invited to relive the profound and saving realities of Calvary ?[1]

Do we believe that it is, in the true literal sense of the word, the only sacrifice through which we give effective expression to God of our whole religion, in adoration, thanksgiving, supplication and expiation ; the sacrifice which unites us to our Creator, which unites men with each other in that wonderful union of hearts and souls of which it is the cause, the bond and the crown ? It is so because the Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ our Lord, " called by God a high priest, according to the order of Melchisedech,"[2] " the great pastor of the sheep,"[3] in it assumes the chief rôle as priest and victim ; and since by reason of the close union that there is between Him our head and us, His members, we all, though in a manner and to a degree that are different, take part in this double rôle of priest and victim at the altar.

Do we believe in the efficacy of this sacrifice ? Do we remember that holy Mass is in practice the chief means whereby men, through the ages, make their own, appropriate, apply to themselves the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and so enter into direct contact with the great mystery of divine Mercy on Calvary ? Do we remember, too, that it is this sacrifice which obtains for us daily the grace of pardon, the forgiveness of punishment which we have deserved and so many spiritual and temporal benefits ?

Do we believe, in the last place, that this sacrifice, at least indirectly, causes us to relive the whole life and the mysteries of Jesus Christ and the saints ? Do there not flow from the altar every morning those abundant graces which make our whole practice of the liturgical year a

[1] *Cours et Conférences de la semaine Liturgique de Maredsous*, 1912.
[2] Heb. v. 10. [3] *Ibid.* xiii. 20.

living one ; which instil into us daily through the mystery that is commemorated or the feast that is celebrated that perfect understanding of Jesus Christ, of Mary and of the saints ? Is it not holy Mass which in this way gives proper importance, its full importance, to the matchless liturgy of the proper of the season and of the saints ; which by slow degrees but increasingly makes us grow in Jesus Christ ; which makes us perfect as, so to say, an additional incarnation of our Redeemer, by applying to our souls the work of His redemption ?

That is not all. It must be repeated here that it is holy Mass that obtains for us the Sacrament of Him who is the life of the soul, a remedy in this present life and a pledge of life to come. By communicating at holy Mass, preferably after the priest's communion, we can enter fully into our parts as *offerers* and *offerings*, because in that way we come into the closest union with Him who has made Himself, before all others, God's priest and God's victim. Or rather, in His sacrifice Jesus Christ thus draws us after Himself more completely ; He carries us, with the greater right, if it may be put thus, before the heavenly altar into the presence of His Father's Majesty, in order the better to heap His blessings and grace upon us.[1]

By uniting us to Himself through our partaking of His Body and Blood He unites us among ourselves. " The Eucharist," says St. Thomas, " is the sacrament of ecclesiastical unity."[2] Baptism has made of us " the body of Christ, and members of member."[3] And again : " So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another."[4] But it is the Eucharist, as a sacrament, which fosters, strengthens and increases

[1] Prayer *Supplices* in the Canon of the Mass.
[2] *Summa Theol.* iii, q. 73, a. 2. [3] 1 Cor. xii. 27.
[4] Rom. xii. 5.

this unity. It is the final solution, it can be said, of the social question ; for the Eucharist alone, in Jesus Christ, is able to bring men together, bind them together, and build up with Christians the wall of bronze which shall hold back the rising tide of anarchy and hate. If only we kept these truths before us, and were bent on living them, as our faith requires us to do !

Sacrifice and sacrament : that is the complete meaning of Eucharist, the thanksgiving that gives full honour to the blessed Trinity since through the Eucharist we give that worship with our whole being, individually and socially, which makes us holy by granting us an ineffable participation in Itself.

Holy Mass, sacrifice and sacrament ! It should be the principal work of our life to recognize in it the *memorial* of Calvary, to see in it the *reality* of the Cross, and through it to grow in Jesus Christ by a perception of the unceasing *effects* of the passion of the Man-God.[1] We should endeavour, all of us indeed but especially we, the priests of the Most High, to make daily progress in knowledge of the mystery of the Son of God. What should we not undergo in order to bring souls to a greater knowledge and love of the Eucharist, sacrifice and sacrament ? We ourselves should gain by it ; and then, too, this knowledge which is still too little cultivated, would be the cause of a great Christian renewal in those whom Providence has given us in charge to be led to the living springs of God Himself.

There is no greater action than holy Mass.

From this we can draw the following conclusion : there is nothing that requires our more worthy and frequent

[1] *Eph. theol. Lovan.* Ann. II, fasc. 3, Julio 1925, *Sur l'unité du Sacrifice rédempteur*, par Dom M. Grégoire, O.S.B.

assistance than these holy mysteries—*hæc digne frequentare mysteria.*

Frequentare means that we ought to be assiduous in our attendance at holy Mass. A true Christian who has understood what the Mass is ought often to be present at it, even every day. One Mass more or less in our lives may mean an incalculable number of graces and blessings obtained or lost for time and eternity; the work of our redemption carried on or retarded. Do we think of it in this way?

Digne. How can we assist worthily at holy Mass? I should like to emphasize this point a little more. To assist worthily at the holy sacrifice of the Mass means to be present with understanding and love, with knowledge of what is done at it, with full appreciation of our part in it, with a firm intention of fulfilling all the obligations it imposes on us. *Worthy assistance* at the holy sacrifice entails a resolution, once and for all, to leave aside all other devotions in order to apply ourselves during it to following the exalted and divine drama that is taking place. *Worthy assistance* at the holy sacrifice means that we must be present at this renewal of Calvary like Mary, like the beloved disciple, like Magdalen and the holy women, with a sense of the deepest humility, unbounded faith and perfect love. When God is sacrificed upon the altar is it not right for us to contemplate this sacrifice, to unite ourselves to it as active spectators of our God's immense love?

But *worthy assistance* at the holy sacrifice requires instruction. That is the purpose of these "Notes." They have been put together to introduce the faithful to the knowledge and practice of the holy mysteries. God has vouchsafed to show His blessing on these "Notes" in the many graces given to souls as a result of reading

them. We pray that He may continue to pour out His abundant blessings on these pages. We offer them particularly to the priests of Jesus Christ, to Christian teachers and to all those men and women who, by vocation or from motives of charity, are concerned with the instruction of the young and with "forming Jesus Christ" in them. We offer this manual to the young themselves, for we do not think that its teaching is too hard for them to understand. The grace of baptism arouses in their eager souls a craving for knowledge of all that concerns the worship of their God. This book is meant to satisfy their holy curiosity; help should be given them, if need be, to grasp the teaching here set out so that they may put it into practice. It should certainly no longer be allowed in any Catholic school or college, as it has been so often in the past, that the course of studies should come to an end without providing any opportunity of learning thoroughly what holy Mass is and what must be done to assist worthily at it.

Nowadays there is an ever urgent demand for men of strong character, for heroes even, who will take up the struggle with no thought of surrender. Men of determination are sought who, standing fast against evil, the flesh and the devil, will be capable of saying *non possumus*. Men of resolution are required; men who, faced with what is good, or with duty or with virtue or the ideal, can encourage each other and side by side with their comrades exclaim with the Apostle *eamus et nos*—Let us too go forth! To what? *Ut moriamur cum ipso*—to die with Jesus Christ, to die to ourselves so as to live again transformed in Him, found worthy henceforward to glorify God and save our brethren.

Souls of such nobility have at all periods been honoured with the name of Christian. And if there are several ways

of training up such characters, true Christian souls, for our part we know no more certain, more direct way than *intelligent assistance at the holy sacrifice of the Mass* with its complement of Eucharistic communion which effects by the power of God that one real union which is strength.[1]

[1] "Where there is no Mass there is no Christianity."

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

§ 1. Sacrifice.

"The end of man and of all things is, in Christ, the worship which is paid to God."[1] Now the liturgy is the official and public expression of this worship, and the heart of the liturgy is the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

What is sacrifice in general?

Ritual or liturgical sacrifice, the only kind that concerns us here, is the highest act of the virtue of religion and of public worship. It is the natural manifestation of the interior and spiritual sacrifice by which a rational creature offers itself completely to God and declares its nullity before Him who is, its nothingness before Him who is All. By the exterior oblation of a sensible thing with which man in some sort identifies himself, which is substituted for him, which will be immolated and offered wholly to God, man symbolizes his especial consecration and his union with God. The end of sacrifice is a recognition of the infinite perfection of the divine Being and of His sovereign dominion over all that has been brought into existence by Him, and over man particularly. This recognition of the Perfect Being who is God is a *Eucharist* or *thanksgiving* in the proper sense of the word; it comprises in its full meaning ideas of *adoration*, by which we prostrate ourselves before the majesty of God, of *gratitude*, praise for His benefits, of *supplication*, which draws down grace upon us, of *expiation*, which allays the divine anger—four ends to which all sacrifice is offered to the divinity and

[1] Dom Gréa, *La Sainte Liturgie* (Paris, 1909), page 27.

by which man is in contact with God. This is the *Eucharist-as-Sacrifice.*

There is another element which completes and perfects the *Eucharist-as-Sacrifice.* When, by means of its sacrifice, a human creature has made its offering or the perfect submission of itself to God; when it has surrendered itself in sacrifice, that is, as God's "holy thing"; God then turns to His creature and invites it to His table, summons it to partake of the divine banquet, and in this way makes it glorious. For God too has guests at His table; He feeds His friends on the very sacrifice that they have offered. This food, made divine through the consecration it has received, has the power of effecting union of God with man, of man with God, a union from which there results for the creature all sorts of benefits which transform it and make it increasingly like its Creator. For us Christians this is the *Eucharist-as-Sacrament.*

This general notion of sacrifice is consonant with the tenets of most religions. The true religion has its own sacrifice. As a *liturgical*, that is, a *public act*, it has to be carried out according to a specific rite and by ministers specially deputed for the purpose. This rite and these ministers have been instituted by God Himself, though in a different manner under the Old and New Law. But just as the Gospel of Jesus Christ surpasses the law of Moses, so is the sacrifice of the New Testament superior to that of the Old. The sacrifice of the Catholic religion remains the only lawful one; it is called the *holy sacrifice of the Mass*; it is the renewal, the application and the full efficacy of that of Calvary.

This sacrifice of the Mass is a true sacrifice. It is the exterior oblation of a sensible thing—that of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine, that is, in a *sacramental manner.* It is offered to

God for the ends mentioned above and this makes it in the highest sense a *Eucharist* or *thanksgiving*. The Pontiff, its principal minister, is the Man-Christ, who at the moment of the hypostatic union received the anointing of the priesthood; the priest in offering to Him the ministry of his hands and lips participates in Christ's priesthood. The essential rite is the transubstantiation which expresses the *immolation—oblation* of the victim, at the same time as His oblation by the Church who unites herself to that of Christ and is merged with it. This transubstantiation is effected by the sacramental words and was instituted by Christ. The other elements were instituted by the Church; she received power to do so from her divine Head. Thus we find in the Mass all the elements of the *Eucharist-as-Sacrifice*.

That is not all; the Mass more than any other sacrifice gives the *Eucharist-as-Sacrament*. This sacrament perfects and completes the sacrifice; it nourishes Christians and makes them in some sort divine, preparing them by slow degrees for the Pasch of eternal life and the beatific vision; God gives Himself as the daily bread of the traveller who thus becomes a guest at God's table—*tuos ibi commensales, coheredes et sodales fac sanctorum civium.*[1]

This Sacrifice is the same as that of the Cross, only offered in a different manner.[2] On Calvary the Sacrifice was offered by Christ in a bloody manner; on the altar it is still Christ who offers it by the ministry of His priests, but in an unbloody manner. The Sacrifice of the Cross merited our redemption; that of the altar applies the fruits of it to our souls.

It is hardly necessary, after what we have said, to insist upon the value of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is

[1] From the Sequence *Lauda Sion* (in the Mass for Corpus Christi).
[2] Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. XXII, cap. 2.

God who offers the Sacrifice, God who is offered. What mysteries have we here! The value of this Sacrifice is infinite; its glory is reflected upon the saints in heaven; it benefits the dead as well as the living; it is the only holocaust truly worthy of the Lord, who in it sacrifices Himself, "*always living to make intercession for us*" (Heb. vii. 25). As He did on the Cross Christ in the Mass makes Himself the living bond uniting us to God.

We can now appreciate the greatness of all divine worship and see "how the act around which it revolves, so to say, and from which it is irradiated, the centre from which its whole movement comes and towards which it is ever directed, the living spring whence it flows and the ocean whither it returns is the redemptive sacrifice itself, present among men in holy Mass and at once both eternal and perpetuated in time, in heaven before God and on earth among men, the mystery of the consummation of all God's plans, once carried out and yet ceaselessly renewed."[1]

These general indications on the holy Sacrifice will be developed in the course of these *Notes*. Since the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the greatest act of our religion nothing must be left undone that contributes to that understanding of it which leads to better assistance at it. And as assistance at Mass is the minimum of worship to which a Christian is obliged there is no more fruitful form of apostolate than to win souls back to it. From it they will draw the help that is needed for salvation.

[1] Dom Gréa, *op. cit.* At this point and continually in the course of these *Notes* we might make long quotations from Fr. de la Taille's wonderful reflections on the sacrifice of the Last Supper, of the Cross, of the altar and their mutual relationship, on the fruits of this sacrifice, on the sacrament of the Eucharist and its effects. His *Mysterium Fidei* is the finest Eucharistic *Summa* that has appeared; priests and faithful will find in it solid food for their piety and their faith.

§ 2. The Church.

The Christian religion has its Sacrifice; we have seen what it is and what its value. It has also its priests to offer the Sacrifice; but where do they offer it? They offer it in a church.

What is a church?

The word *church*[1] is equivalent to the Latin *ecclesia*, which comes from the Greek; it signifies *assembly*, or *union of the faithful;* in this sense we say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." This name has passed from the assemblies to the places where they are held. According to this new sense—and it is the only one with which we are here concerned—a church is an edifice wherein Christians assemble in order to render to God the worship due to Him—that is, public worship, or, in other words, the Liturgy.

From the beginning Christians made use of the buildings of the period, being satisfied with enlarging and adapting them according to their needs. From the third century the Church was in possession of fine buildings called *domus Ecclesiæ* (the houses of the Church) with their *atrium* and their *basilica* or large covered hall. Soon the churches came to be known by the name of the chief part of the building, the *basilica*. When the period of persecution was over the churches developed into buildings of distinction in which full scope was given to art so that all styles were embellished with wonderful masterpieces.

Churches were often orientated, that is, pointed to the East whence Jesus Christ came to us and where His tomb

[1] The English word *church* is said by etymologists to be derived from the Greek κυριακός (*kuriakós*), meaning *belonging to the Lord* (*cf.* 1 Cor. xi. 18-22). Hence we have the Anglo-Saxon *cyrice* or *cirice*, the Scotch *kirk*, and the German *Kirch*. All the Latin languages derive their words signifying the same idea from the Greek ἐκκλησια (*ecclesia*).—Note to English Edition.

is held in veneration. Sometimes the axis of the building is turned to the left as a symbol of Christ on the Cross.

Bells do not seem to have appeared before the seventh century ; until then trumpets and hand rattles were used to call the faithful to church. The special blessing of bells given by the Bishop is called the *baptism of bells* on account of the sprinkling of holy water which accompanies it.

About the ninth century the cock makes its appearance on churches ; it is a reminder of watchfulness and fidelity. It was watching during our Lord's Passion which is commemorated at holy Mass, and it crowed to touch St. Peter's heart.

The church is the Christian's house, in which he adores, returns thanks, atones, and petitions.

The church is the priest's house, in which he sacrifices, pardons, teaches and prays. What a holy place it is in which the priest makes supplication for the crimes and sins of the people ! *Locus iste sanctus est in quo orat sacerdos, pro delictis et peccatis populi.* (Liturgy of the Dedication.)

The church is God's house ; from this fact it derives all its dignity and prerogatives.

Finally, the church is specially destined to be the house of the altar ; it is an edifice built to contain the altar.

The ritual for the construction and for the consecration or dedication of a church admirably expounds these thoughts.

When the Bishop lays the first stone of a church, and invokes upon it the blessing of God, the Liturgy carefully reminds us that this stone is an image of Jesus Christ, "*the chief Corner-stone*" (Eph. ii. 20), which sustains the edifice of the great house or family of God.

When the new temple is consecrated the Liturgy ex-

hausts the riches of its rites and the enthusiasm of its gladness, for it is engaged in preparing a dwelling for the Divine Guest of the Tabernacle.

In the first place, there are long purifications. The outside of the walls is sprinkled with holy water as the procession passes three times round the building. The doors of the church are then opened to the King of Glory, to the strong and mighty God. And then the inside of the walls of the temple is three times purified by the Bishop; next, its flooring at the north, south, east, and west. It is then time to bring in the relics of the Saints, who are to form the court of the God of Heaven. They cross the threshold of the door, which the Bishop has just anointed with holy chrism, and are placed in the sepulchre of the consecrated altar, where they are to repose till the end of time. Twelve columns of the temple—figures of the twelve Apostles, the pillars of our faith—are also anointed with holy oil.

The church is exorcised, purified, and consecrated; the prince of darkness has been driven from it for ever; Christ alone will henceforth reign there: "*How terrible is this place! this is no other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven*" (Gen. xxviii. 17).

Let us Christians, then, go to this place of prayer; for there, more than in any other place, will God accept our homage and hear our prayers.

Moses, prostrate before the burning bush, heard the voice of God saying to him: "*Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*" (Exod. iii. 5). God cries aloud to us, to us Christians: "Purify your hearts; free yourselves from the bonds of self-love; shake off the dust of the earth; tear yourselves away from the distractions of the world; enter with fear into the sanctuary of your God, and recollect yourselves in His Presence."

§ 3. The Altar.

What is the altar ? How many kinds of altars are there ? What does the altar represent ?

Altar is derived from the Latin word *altare*, which means a *high altar or shrine—alta ara ;* it is a table raised above the ground, on which sacrifice is offered.

The Church was to have her own altar—an altar all the more sacred that the Victim immolated thereon is God.

There are two kinds of altars—the fixed or immovable and the portable altar. The first is a large stone slab laid on a base of the same material, with which it forms one immovable and consecrated whole. The second is simply a small stone slab, large enough, however, to hold the chalice and host ; it is let into a table of wood or stone ; only the small stone slab is consecrated ; it may be removed from one table to another.

There are generally several altars in a church, the principal one being the high-altar, usually immovable ; at this the ceremonies are by preference performed. It is a symbol of the unity of the Church because primitively there was only one altar in every church. In the first ages side-altars did not exist ; they were erected later, when there was introduced the custom of celebrating several Masses a day in the same church.

Of whatever material the altar may be constructed, that part on which the chalice and Host are placed must be of stone. A crucifix must be placed on it, to remind the priest and the faithful of the Passion of Jesus Christ, which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass mystically renews. A metal crucifix is not required when there is a picture or a carving of Christ on the Cross as the principal ornament above the altar. This crucifix used to figure on the *ciborium* ;

instead of it, in some places, about the ninth century arose the practice of placing the crucifix on the altar. A candle should be on each side of the cross in honour and veneration of the adorable Victim. Three steps, as a rule, lead up to the high-altar, symbolizing, according to liturgists, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which conduct us to Jesus Christ.

The altar, in fact, represents Jesus Christ, as the Bishop informs the subdeacon at his ordination, and as is shown by the rite for the consecration of altars. The thought of the Sacrifice of the Cross is predominant throughout these ceremonies, in which we may count nearly two hundred signs of the Cross. The altar is of stone, since stone is a figure of Jesus Christ—"*the Corner-stone*" of the Church, as St. Paul calls Him (Eph. ii. 20). Five crosses are engraved on this stone, to represent the five wounds of our Saviour. It is purified by numerous ablutions, for it symbolizes the eternal High-Priest, who, as the Apostle tells us, is "*holy, innocent, and undefiled*" (Heb. vii. 26). It is anointed many times with the oil of catechumens and with holy chrism, as it is an emblem of Him concerning whom it is written: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me*" (Luke iv. 18). In the sepulchre of this stone repose some relics of Saints, one of which at least ought to be that of a Martyr. It is well known that in the primitive Church the Holy Mysteries were celebrated on the tombs of the Martyrs.

The altar, then, represents Jesus Christ; it is a figure of God dwelling in the midst of His people.

The practice of building a *ciborium*, a kind of canopy, over the altar is very ancient. Examples of it are to be found from the fourth century onwards in the East and West. Constantine the Great had the *ciborium* erected at the Lateran. In some places they are extremely ornate.

The Church has never spared any pains to embellish the altar, the holy of holies of her worship.

Hanging from the roof of this *ciborium*, as late as the middle of the sixteenth century, was a golden or silver dove in which the Eucharist was reserved. In 1901 this custom was still maintained at Solesmes Abbey. The use of a tabernacle dates from the sixteenth century. Generally, in the absence of a separate and specially adorned chapel, the tabernacle is set upon the high altar. The inside should be gilt or covered with white silk. The outside should be enclosed with a veil (*conopæum*) which may be of the colour of the day, except black. There should be nothing on the tabernacle except the crucifix, and it is preferable that even that should not be placed upon it.

It is an ancient custom to place relics of the saints upon the altar. But the reliquaries should be taken away during Mass or Office of the Dead, during Advent and Lent and whenever the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. It is very fitting that at the time of their illustrious Head's sacrifice the saints, members of His Body, should be present and associate themselves in their glory in the great act of religion.

§ 4. The Altar Linen.

We reckon as altar linen the altar cloths, the corporal, the pall, and the purificator; the three last are called sacred, as they are used immediately for the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass.

All these cloths must be made from flax or hemp; there is a strict law of the Church condemning the use of cotton.

It can be proved that in the fourth century the cloths covering the altar table were of linen. There must be

three cloths covering the altar—one is not enough—in case an accident should occur, such as the spilling of the Precious Blood. One of these must hang down on both sides of the altar, and touch the ground ; it is sufficient that the other two should cover the consecrated stone. These cloths represent also the winding-sheets in which Jesus's Body was wrapped in the tomb.

The *corporal* is a small linen cloth which the priest spreads on the altar, and on which is wrought the consecration of the sacred species. It is so called on account of its immediate contact with the adorable Body (Lat. *corpus*) of Jesus Christ. In olden times the corporal was much larger ; this was necessary, owing to the number and size of the offerings brought by the faithful to be consecrated. Originally the corporal was perhaps identical with the altar cloth ; it was spread on the altar for the sacrifice and folded up afterwards. Note, in this connection, the *stripping of altars* on Maundy Thursday and the spreading of the altar cloth on Good Friday.

The *pall* is a small square piece of linen used for covering the chalice. Formerly there was no special pall, the chalice being covered with the ends of the corporal, which were folded back over it. When the corporal was made smaller, another cloth was needed for covering the chalice—namely, the pall. Let us notice that, in conformity with the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, the portion of the pall directly touching the chalice must be of flax or hemp ; the upper portion may, however, be of silk and be embroidered, but it must not be black, nor have any emblem of death upon it. The linen cloth underneath, which covers the chalice, must not be merely the lining of this upper portion ; it should be a real pall independent of the foundation to which it is fixed and easily detachable for washing.

The *purificator* is a linen cloth which serves to wipe the chalice. The ancient writers do not mention it. The Cistercian monks used to purify the chalice with a cloth hung at the Epistle corner of the altar. This was afterwards detached, and made an indispensable adjunct of the chalice. We must also mention the finger-cloth which the priest uses to wipe his fingers at the "*Lavabo*" of the Mass.

The cloths covering the altar, and the corporal and the pall must be blessed. For the purificator it is optional but the finger-cloth is not blessed.

The sacred ministers only are allowed to give the corporal, the pall, and the purificator the first washing after use. No one else, except the Sacristan, may touch these cloths before that washing.

The mystical meaning attached to the altar linen is drawn from the material of which they are made. These cloths are of linen, in order the better to represent the winding-sheet in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the Body of our Lord; they also receive the same adorable Body immolated on our altars.

Their whiteness teaches us that if our souls desire to receive worthily "*this Bread which he that eateth shall live for ever*" (John vi. 59), they ought likewise to unfold and present themselves without spot before the eyes of the Divine Lamb.

§ 5. The Church Candle.

What is the church candle? The French word *cierge*,[1] from the Latin *cera*, meaning *wax*, denotes a *wax candle*.

[1] Our English word *candle* is derived from the Latin *candela*, which may be used indifferently for a wax or tallow candle; hence it does not so correctly describe the church candle as does the French *cierge*.—Note to English Edition.

The word *cierge*, therefore, rightly expresses the material from which the church candle is made, and which alone may be used in its manufacture ; compounds of grease, stearine, or purified tallow are not true church candles, and their use is forbidden by the Church.

Church candles are either white or yellow. The latter are made from yellow wax, just as it is extracted from the beehive, whence they derive their aromatic odour. The former are made from the same wax, which has been purified and bleached. The yellow candles are only used at services for the dead and in certain functions of Holy Week. It is fitting also to use these candles at services (of the season) in Advent and Lent.

What is the liturgical use of the candle ?

It is used in nearly all ceremonies—at Mass, in the administration of the Sacraments, and at processions. We must be content here with determining its use at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In general, the number of candles varies according to the solemnity. For Low Mass the rubrics require at least two candles ; in the Roman Liturgy a third may be lit from the *Sanctus* to the *Communion ;* this is placed near the altar, on the Epistle side where the server is. This custom has disappeared in some places. At Solemn Mass—that is, when the celebrant officiates, assisted by deacon and subdeacon—six candles are lit ; and if the Bishop pontificates in person, a seventh is added,[1] the Church symbolizing thereby the seven gifts which the Holy Ghost bestowed upon

[1] The origin of this rubric is to be found in the ancient Papal Mass. When the Pope solemnly celebrated Mass of the *Stations*, all the Roman clergy assisted at it. As the city of Rome was divided into *seven regions*, each of these was represented by an acolyte, who bore a candle. In addition to these candles, there were carried, as is still the practice nowadays, seven candelabra at the Papal Mass (see *Collationes Brugenses*, xiv, 670).

him at his episcopal consecration, when he received the fullness of the priesthood, together with the power of conferring the seven Sacraments. In the ancient Liturgy of the Gauls as many as seven candles were carried at the procession of the Gospel, when the deacon went to the ambo to sing it ; thus, at St. Martin's in Tours, at Rheims, and elsewhere, feasts on which three, five, or seven candles were carried for the singing of the Gospel were called Feasts of Three, Five, or Seven Candlesticks, as the case might be.

It should be remarked that the candlesticks must be placed on both sides of the crucifix, either on the consecrated table or on the reredos, and not on the steps of the altar or elsewhere.

And what does the candle signify ?

The candle, like the altar upon which it stands, is a symbol of Jesus Christ. Has He not called Himself, "*the Light of the World*" (John viii. 12) ? And is He not "*the Light that shineth in darkness*" (John i. 5) ? The candle gives light and warmth, and Jesus Christ dispels the darkness of our ignorance, and enkindles in our hearts true love. The Eternal Light one day became incarnate, and the candle reminds us of this mystery. St. Anselm very beautifully says : "The wax produced by the virginal bee is a symbol of the Flesh of Christ born of the Virgin Mary ; the wick is a symbol of His Soul ; the flame, a symbol of His Divinity."

When, then, we see these candles being gradually consumed upon our altars, let us recall to our minds Him of whom they are the figure. Let us contemplate in these rays of light the rays of Jesus Christ, whose countenance shines in Heaven "*as the sun in its full strength*" (Apoc. i. 16) ; let us reanimate our faith in Him who comes to be immolated on the terrestrial altar, in "*the Lamb which was slain from*

the beginning of the world" (Apoc. xiii. 8), and who is "*the glory and lamp of the celestial city*" (Apoc. xxi. 23). For our part, let us both be and "*walk as children of the light*" (Ep. v. 8), for that is what the candle invites us to do.

§ 6. The Incense.

Incense is a resinous substance extracted from a tree that grows in Palestine and Arabia. In Latin there are two words for it: (1) *thus*, derived from a Greek verb which means *to perfume;* and (2) *incensum*, from a Latin verb signifying *to burn*, whence the word *incense*. We are able to unite these two meanings and say that incense is a perfume destined to be consumed in honour of God.

The Greeks and Romans knew the use of incense. It was carried as a sign of honour before persons of high rank; gradually this honour was given to Bishops, to other dignitaries, even to objects.

The thurible is a liturgical instrument in which burns the fire that is to dissolve and devour this perfume. Originally the thurible was merely a large vase, without chains, filled with live coals. A mosaic at St. Vitalis in Ravenna proves that in the sixth century the thurible was even then suspended by chains. The thurible was carried by acolytes *ad nares hominum*, to the noses of the assistants, as used to be said; the latter stretched out their hands gathering and drawing to themselves the fragrant fumes of the incense.

Fourth century evidence proves that incense was used to perfume churches long before it was in use to cense persons or things. The *Peregrinatio Sylviæ ad Loca sancta* narrates that on Sunday morning at cockcrow when the Bishop and his ministers entered the sanctuary

of the *Anastasis* (Resurrection) which was already lighted with countless lamps, after prayer and psalmody, and before the Bishop read the Gospel to the people, thuribles were brought and the basilica of the Resurrection was filled with a fragrant odour.

The Liturgy makes frequent use of incense. Holy Church uses it in almost all her ceremonies—at Solemn Mass, at the Offices of Lauds and Vespers—and also in her blessings: among others, the three great liturgical blessings of the year—that of candles on Candlemas day, of ashes on Ash Wednesday, and of palms on Palm Sunday. We must also mention its use at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. We shall speak in the proper place of the incensing of the altar at Solemn Mass.

Incense has likewise its symbolism, for this perfume, used so often by the Church, should unceasingly remind us that we ought to be "*the good odour of Christ*" (2 Cor. ii. 15), and to spread everywhere around us the knowledge and love of God.

We can ascend even higher, and find a more beautiful interpretation of incense. With the well-beloved Apostle in his vision at Patmos, let us contemplate in Heaven the Angels swinging their golden censers before the throne of the Lamb. These censers, this Prophet says, were "*full of odours*," and these odours he reveals to us were nothing less than "*the prayers of the Saints*" (Apoc. v. 8). Incense, then, is symbolical of prayer, and as it ascends to Heaven it calls to our minds that our prayer should be pure, fervent, and scented with the sweet odour of our virtues.

§ 7. The Priest, Deacon, and Subdeacon.

The word *priest* is derived from the Latin *presbyter* which in its turn comes from a Greek work signifying *an ancient, a wise man*, or *a person of dignity*. The wisdom,

authority, and social office which honour the minister of God have rightly merited for him this name of *priest*. The expression, however, is vague ; our tongue has no term to convey the profound sense of that other Latin word for priest, *sacerdos*. *Sacerdos* signifies *one who dispenses sacred things*, one who is made an intermediary between God and men : between God, from whom he receives, and men, to whom he dispenses ; between God, to whom he offers up gifts, and men, who charge him to present them.

But this man, thus constituted between God and his fellow-creatures, is, and can only be, a substitute. There is, indeed, as the Apostle testifies, but one true and only Mediator : "*For there is one God*," he writes, "*and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all*" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). If Jesus is the only Mediator between God, His Father, and men, He is likewise the only Priest. On the other hand, if the minister of the altar is truly a mediator and truly a priest as faith teaches us, he can be so only in virtue of a special delegation, given to him on the solemn day of his ordination. Considered as a private person, the priest is not different from other men ; yet, inasmuch as he is the minister of God, he represents Jesus Christ Himself, from whom he derives all the power, the authority, and the efficaciousness of his mediation. The only priest at Mass and elsewhere in the exercise of worship is Jesus Christ ; our consecrated priests are not the successors of Jesus in the priesthood, but His ministers.

The liturgical rite for the consecration of priests is very instructive on this subject. A double power is conferred upon them—the one to be exercised upon the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the other upon His Mystical Body, which is the Church or the union of all the faithful. By the first power the priest is made a sacrificer, and by

the second a judge ; but both powers can operate only in the name of Christ.

Let us briefly recall the ceremonies of ordination. It takes place during Mass. The consecrating Bishop has carefully inquired as to the merits of him whom the Church presents. To the candidate he insists with force and unction upon the greatness of the charge of which a priest assumes the responsibility. The Adorable Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins, the whole celestial court, is invoked on behalf of the aspirant : "*Lord,*" prays the Bishop, "*deign to bless, sanctify, and consecrate Thine elect*" (Roman Pontifical, *Ordination of Priests*).

Then the Levite advances, and the Bishop imposes in silence his hands upon his head. The assisting priests do likewise ; then all together they extend their right hands over the future priest. This is a solemn moment, for it is then, while the Bishop prays, that there is infused into the deacon the sacerdotal *grace* ; it is then that the Holy Spirit descends and reposes upon the head of him whom He has predestined from all eternity to this sublime vocation. Ah ! if the heavens were now to open, as they did once by the Jordan, we should hear the voice of the Father proclaiming in favour of this new Christ : "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matt. iii. 17), for Jesus is born again and perpetuated in this new priest.

The Bishop clothes the ordinand with the sacerdotal vestments ; he crosses the stole over his breast, a touching symbol of that Cross with which the Eternal Priest, Jesus Christ, was laden on the day of His sacrifice. He puts on him the chasuble, an emblem of love, a treasure so much needed by a priest.

The ordinand then presents his hands, and the Bishop anoints the palms by making a cross with the oil of cate-

chumens from the thumbs to the index-fingers, at the same time saying : " *Lord, deign to consecrate and sanctify these hands by this unction and by our blessing, in order that whatever they shall bless may be blessed, and whatever they shall consecrate may be consecrated and sanctified in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ* " (Roman Pontifical, *Ordination of Priests*).

Then follows the tradition of the instruments. The Bishop makes the ordinand touch the chalice containing the wine and the paten on which lies the host, saying : " *Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate Mass for the living and the dead in the Name of the Lord.*" The Mass, which has been interrupted from the end of the *Tract* after the Epistle, is now resumed. After the Communion the Bishop lays his hands a second time on the new priest, saying : " *Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they shall be forgiven ; and whose sins you shall retain, they shall be retained* " (John xx. 23). Unheard-of power ! " *Who can forgive sins but God only ?* " (Mark ii. 7). It is true, God alone can absolve a sinner, but it is because the priest has received the power of Jesus, who is God, that he will in due time work this wonder.

The priest, then, is a consecrator, a judge, a depositary of Divine power, a mediator between God and men, a visible representative of the " *Great Pastor of the sheep* " (Heb. xiii. 20). The priest is all this . . . " *I believe, Lord* " (Mark ix. 23).

As we shall frequently have to speak of the *deacon* and *subdeacon* in the course of this work, it will be well to say here a few words concerning them. *Deacon* and *subdeacon* are two words, derived from the Greek, meaning *ministers* or *servers*—that is, the assistants of the priest at the altar.

The *diaconate* and *subdiaconate* are two major and holy

orders[1] of the Roman Church. The former has always been such, but the subdiaconate has only been considered a sacred order since the time of Innocent III—that is, from the commencement of the thirteenth century. These orders are very ancient. The diaconate is of Divine institution ; this is less certain with regard to the subdiaconate. The early Fathers mention and exalt the dignity of these orders.

The special office of the deacon is to sing the Gospel, and directly to assist the priest at the altar. In olden times, when there were fewer priests, deacons were entrusted with many other very high functions, which are nowadays normally reserved to priests ; they used to baptize and distribute Holy Communion ; they still do so in certain cases. The subdeacon sings the Epistle, and directly assists the deacon, and indirectly the priest, in all that regards the Holy Sacrifice.

The *vestments* peculiar to each are the stole and the dalmatic for the deacon, and the maniple and the tunic for the subdeacon. About these we shall say something later.

These two ministers of the priest, on account of their office, are invested with extraordinary dignity. They approach the nearest to the Holy of Holies. It is they who, at the altar, represent the faithful and answer in their name.

§ 8. The Sacerdotal Vestments.

What are the sacerdotal vestments ? What is their origin ? And what do they symbolize ?

The vestments of the priest are : the biretta, the amice,

[1] As is well known, the Roman Liturgy distinguishes seven orders or degrees, leading to the priesthood. They are : Porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon and priest. The tonsure is not an order ; it prepares for orders, making the layman an ecclesiastic and separating him from the world.

the alb, the girdle, the maniple, the stole, and the chasuble.

The *biretta* is spoken of in the twelfth century, and the actual word *birretum* is met with in the thirteenth century; the present shape of the biretta dates from the sixteenth century. The priest wears the biretta when leaving and returning to the sacristy, and when seated in the choir. All his ministers should do likewise.

The *amice*, from the Latin word *amicire*, *to cover*, is a linen cloth, with which the priest covers his neck and shoulders before putting on the alb.

The *alb*, from the Latin *alba* (*vestis*, understood) or *white vestment*, is a long white robe reaching to the feet; whence it is called by the Greeks *poderis*, from a word meaning *foot*.

The *girdle* is intended to fasten the alb, so that its fullness may not inconvenience the priest. The priest wears the *maniple* on his left arm, crosses the *stole* over his breast, and finally puts on the *chasuble* over the other vestments. The *tunic* is the vestment of the subdeacon, and the *dalmatic* that of the deacon.

As regards the origin of the sacred vestments, most of them were anciently common to ecclesiastics and lay-folk alike. Gradually, however, they passed into the exclusive use of the ministers of the altar.

The Church did not prescribe the *amice* until the eleventh century. The Egyptian monks wore it as well as the girdle. Cassian describes it very well: "It is used to secure the rather ample tunic to the body." For a long time it was worn over the alb, as the Ambrosian rite[1] still orders. The amice entirely covers the neck. One of

[1] The Liturgy of the Church of Milan, called "Ambrosian," because St. Ambrose, the Bishop of that city, considerably added to it.

the oldest mystical explanations of this custom is given by Amalarius : "*Collum undique cingimus, quia vox in collo est*"—"We completely cover the neck, because the voice is in the neck" (Amalarius, *De Eccles. Offic.*, Lib. ii, c. 17). Hence the formula used by the Bishop at the ordination of a subdeacon, when the amice is given : "*Receive the amice, the symbol of moderation in speech*" (Roman Pontifical). In the eleventh century it was first put on the head, and it was only after the priest had put on all the vestments that he dropped it over his neck. In some places, as early as the twelfth century, the amice was used to cover the head during a portion of the Holy Sacrifice, and for this reason it was later called, in liturgical symbolism, *galea salutis—the helmet of salvation* (*cf.* Rupert Tuit., *De Divinis Officiis*, L. i, c. 19). From the commencement of this period until the sixteenth century amices fringed with gold and silver were in use.

The *alb* is a very early sacerdotal vestment. The children of Aaron were commanded by God to wear linen tunics. "The linen vestment," says Dom Gréa, "is essentially the clerical habit." In the vision of St. John it is the vestment of the Church : "And it is granted to her that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white" (Apoc. xix. 8). The method of its preparation and the whiteness of this vestment are a symbol of the righteousness and innocence that have been acquired through tribulations borne in union with Christ : "For the fine linen are the justifications of saints" (*Ibid.*). "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. vii. 14). In the primitive Church the sacred ministers always wore it, even when not engaged in liturgical functions. It is the ancient tunic which was originally an under-garment. The white robes worn by the neophytes, or newly baptized,

during the Octave of Easter, and laid aside on the following Saturday—called for this reason *in albis*—were the same garments. *Ornamented albs* appear in the ninth century and *albs of lace* in the seventeenth century.

The *girdle*, as we have said, was originally a monastic garment and was added from necessity. It symbolizes modesty, continence and probity ; of old it was considered a dishonour to be ungirded. *Ordo Romanus I* is the first document to mention it as an ecclesiastical vestment.

The name *maniple* is sometimes said to be derived from the Latin word *mappa* or *mappula*, which means a *handkerchief*, *napkin* or *small cloth*. That is wrong ; it comes from *manus*, hand. Originally this vestment was part of certain ceremonial costumes, of that of a consul, for example, when he inaugurated the games at the circus. In very early times this ornament was given in representations, as a sign of respect, to our Saviour or our Lady. " When persons are represented in the act of presenting or receiving an object, a napkin of some costly material, unfolded, almost always lies across their hands. Some ancient monuments which have no connection with liturgical costume show us how the *mappula* was carried when it was not in use for presenting or receiving some object. It was folded together and placed over the left arm with the extremities hanging down " (Duchesne, *Christian Worship*). In the *Ordo Romanus I* the subdeacon is seen with the *mappula* on his right arm ; he uses it as a badge of authority when he gives orders to the *Schola Cantorum*.

Since Amalarius, in the ninth century, liturgists have considered that the maniple was used to wipe away sweat, whence its name of *sudarium* that is sometimes used. But many reject this opinion. At the Abbey of Cluny the altar-boys wore maniples. " At St. John's in Lyons the choristers sang the prophecies on Holy Saturday,

holding the maniple in their left hand, between their fingers. It was originally their handkerchief, which they held ready for use if needed whilst reading the lessons, which were very long " (G. de Moléon, *Liturgical Journeys in France*, p. 63 ; Paris, 1718).

Later, the maniple became a costly serviette for presenting or receiving anything. In the tenth century it became a distinctive badge of clerks in Holy Orders, and was henceforth worn only at Mass.

" The *stole*, during the first eight centuries, was called the *orarium* (from the Latin *os*, " the face "), and was originally a piece of fine linen used by people of dignity for wiping the face. The napkin was especially convenient for public speakers. On this account it became in the Church an ornament for Bishops, priests, and deacons " (Le Brun, *Explication des Prières de la Messe*).

As far back as the early Middle Ages a connection was seen between *orarium* and *orator* (preacher). It is possible that therein lies the reason for their adoption of it as an ornament, which they have done since the fourth century, at least outside Rome. No Roman representation of the *orarium* is known anterior to the twelfth century. Priests and deacons who figure in the mosaics never exhibit this detail of dress. There is reason to think that those who gave the name *stole*, *stola*, to the *orarium*, did so because they took it for a remnant—that is, the border or orphrey —of a long garment open in front, whereas it simply replaced the large handkerchief which used to hang round the neck (Le Brun).

" The deacon wears the *stole* over the left shoulder. In primitive times it hung straight down in front and behind. Later, doubtless for the purpose of better fixing it, the two sides were brought together under the right arm " (Desloge, *Études*). The priest crosses the stole at Mass,

whilst the Bishop allows the two arms of it to fall "straight down from the neck," because of his pectoral cross, as some think. Perhaps it is more correct to say that Bishops still wear the stole in the ancient and primitive way.

The *chasuble* is the primitive Roman *pœnula* (from *pannus*, cloth), a garment that was used on all sorts of occasions, particularly on journeys, worn by everybody, everywhere. Towards the end of the fourth century it became the daily dress of senators. Gradually it was reserved to the ministers of the altar. A fifth-century mosaic in the chapel of St. Satyrus at Milan shows St. Ambrose vested in a *pœnula*. The Latins also call the chasuble *casula*, a small house; the Greeks *planeta*, an *unfixed object which turns easily, protecting the shoulders*. As a matter of fact, the primitive chasuble rather resembled *a small house* in which the priest stood enclosed. Its circular form allowed it to be easily turned round the neck. In order to have his hands free, the priest raised the chasuble at the sides, and at the Elevation the deacon lifted it up behind to assist him in his movements. This rubric is still observed, although the reason for it no longer exists. Since the eighth century the chasuble has been cut out over the arms, imperceptibly attaining its present form, which reminds us very little of the original. At some Masses, those of Advent and Lent for example, the deacon and subdeacon wear the chasuble. But they wear it folded up in front, probably in order to leave them freedom of movement. "When their ministry requires much movement around the altar, when they have to penetrate right into the crowded congregation to reach the ambo for the reading of the Epistle or Gospel, the subdeacon removes his chasuble, the deacon takes off and rolls his up; thus reduced to the form of a band he wears it over his left shoulder; he appears at the altar, therefore, according

to the old saying: *Succinctus et expeditus sine multa veste* (girded and free from superfluous garments), free from his vestment which might hinder his liberty of movement in his ministry to the priest in the holy Mysteries."[1] In very early times, too, the acolytes wore chasubles.

The word *tunic* is a generic term, which was of old given also to other vestments besides that peculiar to the subdeacon; it was originally the usual Roman garment. It merely denotes nowadays the garment worn by the subdeacon. It is a long robe, with rather narrow and closed sleeves, worn over the alb. The use of the tunic dates back to the sixth century, but it must be said that it was not then universal. It was not until much later that it was prescribed in the Latin Church. It appears that the tunic was originally a kind of precious alb kept for solemnities. It symbolizes joy—it is an *indumentum lætitiæ*, "a garment of joy," as the Liturgy calls it. Formerly in the great abbeys and cathedrals, on feast days, the choir boys wore the tunic.

The *dalmatic* is to-day the same, or almost the same, as the tunic. This robe originated in Dalmatia, whence its name; it was probably introduced into Rome in the second century. It was longer than the tunic, and very ample. The sleeves were also wider, but likewise closed up. Later, the sleeves of the dalmatic and tunic were slit. This is the form now in use in most of our churches.[2] These sleeves were short, not reaching below the elbow. The dalmatic was worn over the tunic—a custom still observed by the Bishop when he celebrates pontifically. Emperors even have worn this vestment. As a sacred vestment, the dalmatic was originally reserved to Bishops.

[1] Dom Gréa, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[2] This remark chiefly applies to churches in France and Belgium. —Note to English Edition.

St. Sylvester, in the fourth century, gave it to the deacons of Rome, and by degrees it became universally the vestment proper to deacons. In the Liturgy it is called the garment of justice—*dalmatica justitiæ*.

A few words more concerning the symbolism of the sacerdotal vestments.

The Church instructs us on this subject through the prayers which she bids priests to say while they are vesting. As we have said, the priest at the altar is the substitute of Jesus Christ. In order to appear worthily in the presence of God the Father and before the heavenly court, his soul ought to be adorned with the virtues of Him whom he represents.

As a new Jacob, wearing the garments of Esau the first-born, he will appear before the heavenly Father; and God will be pleased again by the sweet-smelling savour that rises up from the heart of His only Son hidden in this priest.

While the celebrant is putting on these vestments he begs from the Lord the virtues which they call to mind. As he puts on the amice: *Put on my head, Lord, the helmet of salvation, so that I may withstand the onslaughts of the devil.* This helmet is the symbol of Christian hope, so necessary to the priest as he approaches the holy Mysteries; never more than at this moment does the devil try to deprive him of his peace of soul, peace of understanding and of heart.

As he puts on the alb: *Cleanse me, Lord, and purify my heart so that washed in the Blood of the Lamb I may come to everlasting joy.* The alb is the emblem of innocence. It symbolizes the man who has conquered his unruly passions, and is now worthy, in his innocence, to appear before infinite Purity. For the Lord has said: "He that shall overcome, shall be clothed in white garments,

and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Apoc. iii. 5).

As he puts on the girdle: *Gird me, Lord, with the girdle of purity and quench in my loins all lustful desires, so that the virtue of chastity and continence may abide in me.* The girdle is the emblem of mortification. It is mortification which ensures innocence of life. Without it a priest is not a minister of Jesus Crucified, for "they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and the concupiscences" (Gal. iv. 24).

As he puts on the maniple: *May I be worthy, Lord, to bear the sheaf of tears and sorrow so that I may with great joy receive the reward of my toil.* Whenever the priest goes up to the altar he ought to renew the resolution he took on his ordination day to exert himself, to sacrifice himself for souls. The sacrifice of Calvary that he is about to renew recalls to him every morning that great rule of priestly self-sacrifice.

As he puts on the stole: *Give back to me, Lord, the stole of immortality which I lost through the sin of our first parent; and although I am unfit to approach thy holy mysteries grant that I may yet win everlasting joy.* The stole is the emblem of immortality. The priest who puts it on should be mindful of the glorious ministry that he is about to carry out. His holy office transports him, so to say, into glory before the Majesty of God, to the eternal Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord. If he would be united to the eternal sacrifice of the Only and Immortal Priest according to the order of Melchisedech, the priest, in celebrating, must rise to this great height.

As he puts on the chasuble: *Lord, who hast said: My yoke is sweet and My burden is light; grant that I may bear it in such a manner as to obtain Thy grace.* The chasuble

is the symbol of charity, emblem of the love of God and of our neighbour. In sacrificing the Divine Victim the priest resolves to become holy himself, to make others holy. Holiness is the fruit of charity. Now charity is carrying out the laws of God. We must love this yoke, this burden of God.

§ 9. The Liturgical Colours.

The Church did not originally fix on any special colours for the vestments, as is still the case in the Eastern Church. It was only towards the twelfth century that there emanated from ecclesiastical authority definite directions on this matter. They originated, probably, in the tendency during this century towards symbolism.

The colours recognized by the Roman Liturgy and prescribed by Pius V are: white, red, green, purple, black and rose. The symbolical sense which these colours receive in Holy Scripture has also determined the circumstances in which our rubrics prescribe them.

White denotes joy and innocence, the glory of the Angels, the triumph of the Saints, as also the Divinity and victory of the Redeemer. This colour is assigned in the Roman Church to feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ, such as Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, and the feasts of the Sacred Heart and of Christ the King; to feasts of the Blessed Virgin; to the feast of All Saints, and to all feasts of Pontiffs, Doctors, Confessors, and Virgins—in general, of all those Saints who were not martyrs.

Red symbolizes, on account of its brightness, fire, and, of its colour, blood. It is used for the feasts of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Cross, the Passion, and the Martyrs, including the Apostles.

Green, the colour of spring, is the symbol of hope ; it is employed during the period which in liturgical mysticism signifies *the pilgrimage to Heaven*—that is, the season after the Epiphany and Whit Sunday.

Purple was anciently regarded as a colour signifying royalty, power, high dignity, and wealth. The Church has reversed this symbolism by substituting for it that of penance, humiliation, and prayer in time of affliction ; for is it not by these that we are truly enriched and exalted ? She employs this colour during Advent, Septuagesima and Lent, on Ember days, Vigils, and Rogation days, as also at the three solemn liturgical blessings occurring in the course of the year—namely, those of Candlemas day, Ash Wednesday, and Palm Sunday.

Black typifies the power which rises up against God—the action of Satan and his victories. It is used on Good Friday and in Offices of the Dead ; for the fallen Angel was the author of our death, and that of Christ was necessary to save us from the consequences of ours.

In some churches *rose* is used twice in the year—namely, on *Gaudete Sunday*, the third Sunday in Advent, and on *Lætare Sunday*, the fourth Sunday in Lent. The origin of this practice is that on *Lætare Sunday* the Pope blessed the rose which he was going to send to one or other of the Christian Princes. The same colour was afterwards used on *Gaudete Sunday*, which has certain liturgical analogies with that of *Lætare*.

Such are the colours of the vestments used by the Roman Church ; she does not sanction any others. The Sacred Congregation of Rites has forbidden the use of vestments which exhibit other colours than the one prescribed, unless this latter is the predominant one. The Congregation has also forbidden the use of yellow and blue. *Cloth of gold* is tolerated, and, according to the custom in Rome, it may

serve for either white, red, or green. Cloth of silver may serve for white. We should note here that it is not the cross on a chasuble or the trimmings of a tunic which determine its colour; but it is the groundwork of the vestment.

Finally, let us remark that what has been said about the liturgical colours does not concern only the sacerdotal vestments, but all the ornaments used for worship, as the frontal or tapestry hung before the altar, and the *canopy* or tabernacle veil, etc.

§ 10. Plain-Song.

Holy Church has her own chant, a sacred chant surpassed by no other as an expression of prayer, that simple fervent prayer that springs from the human soul in search of God.

The name plain-song (*cantus planus*) was given in the sixteenth century to the music of the Church on account of its simplicity and in contradistinction to measured or figured music which was then beginning to compete with it. It is also known as *cantus firmus* (Italian *canto fermo*) because of the calm, sedate, definitive and well-regulated effect that it produces; *cantus choralis*, because it is meant for singing in choir; *liturgical chant*, because it is confined to the liturgy; *Gregorian chant*, because it was reformed by St. Gregory the Great (†604).

The Church took her chant from the East, from the Greeks and the Jews. St. Gregory gathered together and made additions to the repertory of chant then in existence. He set it in order. Under Pepin and Charlemagne plain-song spread throughout their empire. In the ninth century famous schools of plain-song were founded at St. Gall and Metz rivalling those of the Lateran at Rome

or the famous one founded at Chartres in the twelfth century by St. Fulbert. Guido d'Arezzo in the eleventh century by his invention of the four-line staff facilitated the execution of plain-song.

Plain-song was taught and in use in the mediaeval schools. It began to lose its pristine purity with the advent of polyphony in the sixteenth century. In the nineteenth century Dom Guéranger, the well-known founder of the abbey of Solesmes, started his monks on those learned researches that led to the restoration of plain-song to its primitive beauty. Dom Pothier's *Mélodies grégoriennes d'après la tradition*, published in 1880, is now famous. It is a real masterpiece. The Vatican edition of plain-song, published in 1907 by Pius X, is based on the 1885 Solesmes edition. It was made authoritative for the universal Church by the decree of August 7, 1907.

Gregorian chant is true prayer, the sung prayer of Christian unity—one voice, one sound, one sole prayer, the mighty expression of the prayer of the whole Church. There are gravity, peace and majesty in this chant, although its wonderful effect is produced with such simple, unelaborate means. There is no single emotion of the Christian people's collective soul to which plain-song does not give calm and peaceful expression.

Pius X's *Motu proprio* (November 22, 1907) which regulates the nature and position of the Church's chant does not, however, exclude all other religious music. It praises the use, in large churches and cathedrals, of classical polyphony in the manner of Palestrina. Nor does it by any means reject the contribution that modern music can make to the dignity and beauty of the Church's chanted prayer. At the same time the following general rule should be borne in mind : " A piece of ecclesiastical music is more especially sacred and liturgical in so far

as its movement, inspiration and style resemble that of Gregorian melody; in the measure that it departs from this supreme model it is to that extent less worthy of the Church."

§ 11. The Blessing and Sprinkling of Water on Sundays.

To complete these introductory notes to the liturgy we must now say a few words about two rites that immediately precede the Sunday High Mass: the blessing of water and the Asperges.

A.—The Blessing of Water.

The *Blessing of Water* is a very ancient liturgical ceremony. Even as early as the second century, Tertullian speaks of water made holy by the invocation of God. The most solemn blessing of water, as is well known, was that of the baptismal fonts, which still takes place on Holy Saturday and on the Eve of Pentecost. On these days some of the faithful, moved by piety, used to carry away some of this holy water, before the chrism was mixed with it, to sprinkle their houses and fields therewith. This practice soon became general, and then, as the water blessed on these two great feasts was found insufficient for the devotion of the people, some authors think there was introduced the ceremony of blessing water on every Sunday, on which day, as we have seen, all the people assembled together for prayer. Charlemagne, in his *Capitularies*—a collection of ordinances arranged in chapters—prescribes that on every Sunday the priest should bless water before Mass. The practice became general in the tenth century. In the acts of a council held at Nantes about the year 900 may be found the following: "Every

Sunday before Mass the priest will bless water in a clean and suitable vessel. He will use it to sprinkle on the people when they enter the church. And with the cross carried before him he will go round the outside of the church sprinkling this holy water and praying for the souls of those who are buried there. In addition, whoever wishes may take some of this water in a vessel to sprinkle their houses, fields, vineyards, flocks with their fodder, food and drink." On Easter Sunday and Whit Sunday water is not blessed, as on these days that which has been blessed the day before is used. The ritual for the blessing of water is full of meaning. The priest takes salt and water, and, having exorcised them, mixes them together, and finally blesses them with certain prayers.

What do these ceremonies mean ? The property of *salt* is to preserve from corruption ; that of *water*, to purify. The priest *exorcises* them—that is, delivers them from all contact with the Devil ; this the Church always does whenever she raises a creature to a sacred use. He *mixes* them, that the consecrated water may contain the virtue which preserves from corruption, as well as that which purifies. He *blesses* them with the sign of the Cross, that Cross which is the weapon of salvation and the source of all grace. He *prays ;* he asks that the water may have the power of driving the Devil from our souls, our bodies, and our homes, of healing our diseases, and of bringing down upon us the presence and succour of the Holy Ghost.

Holy water has the power to efface the venial sins of all who use it with faith in Jesus Christ and attrition or imperfect contrition for their faults. " *Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin* " (Ps. 1. 4).

B.—The Asperges.

Why does the *Asperges* take place before High Mass ?

The *Asperges* takes place before the greatest of all liturgical actions—the Mass—to teach us a great truth, which is insisted on in all the prayers in preparation for the Holy Sacrifice. It is that we must purify ourselves for this great Act.

In the Old Law, when God details to His priests and people the rite of oblation, it is surprising to see the number of purifications which He prescribes for this purpose. And yet the sacrifices of Israel, though sacred, were far inferior to that of Christians. "*To no nation,*" exclaims St. Thomas, "*has it been given to have their gods so near them as is our God to us.*"

During the *Asperges* the choir sings the following antiphon, which is immediately followed by the first verse of the psalm *Miserere* and the *Gloria Patri :*

Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo et mundabor ; lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor.

Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop,[1] O Lord, and I shall be cleansed ; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow (Ps. l. 9).

The priest first sprinkles the altar to banish from it the spirit of darkness who roams about everywhere, even within the precincts of the sanctuary. He then sprinkles himself, for he, above all others, ought to be pure. Next he passes down the ranks of the congregation, imparting to them purifying graces.

And while performing this ceremony he recites in a low voice, together with his ministers, the *Miserere*, whereby he expresses the feelings of repentance that animate both

[1] Hyssop is a plant with tufted leaves which the Jews used for their aspersions.

himself and the people—feelings which dispose them to receive the gift of God.

During Paschal-time—that is to say, from Easter to Whitsuntide inclusively—the choir sings a different antiphon, which is followed by the first verse, no longer of the *Miserere*, but of Ps. cxvii—*Confitemini Domino.* The following is the antiphon, which is suggested by Ezech. xlvii. 2 :

Vidi aquam egredientem de templo a latere dextro, Alleluia ; et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista salvi facti sunt, et dicent, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, Alleluia; and all to whom that water came were saved, and they shall say, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

As we have said above, water was not blessed before Mass on Easter Sunday or Whit Sunday. The water from the baptismal fonts blessed the day before was used on these feasts. Holy Church at this liturgical season is wholly occupied with the benefits conferred upon us by Baptism, for at one time it was especially administered on these days. The antiphon speaks of the salutary fruits of the Sacrament of Regeneration ; they issue in abundance from the sacred side of Jesus Christ, the true temple of God, whence flowed the Blood and the Water on the day of His triumph on the Cross. The antiphon invites us to be joyful and thankful. For this reason the *Miserere* is discontinued at this time.

If we had more faith, we should always be most careful to be in church in time to reap the graces of the *Asperges.*

THE HOLY MASS

NOTES ON THE LITURGY

§ 1. The Mass in General.

What does the word *Missa* (Mass) mean? "It means dismissal because primitively at the offertory were sent out of the church those who were not yet baptised (catechumens) and those who were undergoing penance; because, too, at the end of the sacrifice the whole congregation was dismissed with the words *Ite, missa est*—Go, it is the dismissal. Thus the faithful are taught not to leave the church until the sacrifice is completed, until the Church herself who invited us to it sends us away to our own homes there to live out the spirit of the sacrifice among our daily cares, so far as in us lies" (Grancolas).

So we see how the name of a simple detail—the dismissal of the congregation, a detail that contains no essential element—has become the name of the whole function. In the West the word Mass to denote the holy sacrifice is widespread from the sixth century. St. Gregory the Great, St. Gregory of Tours, St. Cæsarius of Arles, use the word in the same sense.

The oldest name for Mass is Eucharist, as may be seen in reading the Fathers of the Church. It means *thanksgiving*; and surely that is what the Mass is. It is also called *Liturgy*, that is, public service, for the public service in the highest sense of the word is eucharistic. Even nowadays in the East "the holy Liturgy" means nothing else than the Mass.

The Mass was called by other names as well, such as

the Breaking of Bread, Communion, the Lord's Supper, the Sacrifice, *Synaxis* or Assembly. The Fathers (Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Justin) called it *Dominicum* (sc. *convivium*), *dominica solemnia*, *dominica Passio*, *divina sacrificia*. The word *Agenda* or *Actio* we shall return to later on.

The Mass, liturgy in the highest sense of the word, though always essentially the same, has only by degrees undergone its actual arrangement. The Eastern Church has still several different rites for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. There is the Liturgy of St. James, and those of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, of St. Basil, and of St. John Chrysostom, as also the beautiful Armenian Liturgy. The Western Church had also several rites. Beside the ancient Roman Rite, there were the Gallican Rite, the ancient Liturgy of the Gauls (5th–8th century), the Milanese or Ambrosian Liturgy and the Mozarabic Rite of Spain.[1] The Roman Church follows nowadays the *new* Roman Rite, which was made of obligation by St. Pius V in the sixteenth century, and which is a development of that of the *ancient* Roman. We shall confine ourselves to the study of this, our own modern rite.

We must first distinguish between two kinds of Masses—namely, the *Sung Mass* and the *Low Mass*; the first is called a *High*, or *Solemn*, Mass; the second, *Private Mass*.

Originally, it must be understood, there was only the solemn, sung Mass. Moreover the norm of this solemn Mass is the papal Mass celebrated by the Pope himself according to ceremonial fixed at Rome about the year 700 and contained in the *Ordo Romanus I*, a kind of book of ceremonies for the papal court of those days. Bishops

[1] *The Mozarabic Liturgy* was anciently followed in Spain by those Christians who lived in the eighth century, under the yoke of the Moors. They were called Mozarabs, or Mixtarabs, on account of their mixing with the Arabs.

when they celebrated—especially in their own city—took this ceremonial as a model. "The *Ordo Romanus I* adds that if the stational Mass (Mass at the 'station' or titular church of the day in the liturgy) is celebrated by a priest he has not the right to say the *Gloria in excelsis*, except on Easter Sunday; but in all else he celebrates in the same way as a bishop would were he taking the Pope's place. Thus the papal Mass is the model for the priest's Mass. In effect, private Mass is the papal Mass reduced to its simplest expression. The maxim is right which lays down that the rubrics of low Mass are to be explained in the light of those for high Mass, just as the latter are to be found in their primitive form in the *Ordines Romani* of the eighth century" (Battifol).

Mass, we said, was always sung; yet the celebration of low Masses dates back to beyond the eighth century when churches, private chapels, and consequently altars, began to be multiplied. Devotion to the *memoriæ martyrum*, the memorials of the martyrs, in the Christian cemeteries, was a contributing cause. People desired to have their own tomb near that of a martyr; on this tomb, on the anniversary of a death, a private Mass was celebrated. Owing to the number of Masses, it became impossible to celebrate them with the usual solemnity, and so this privilege was reserved to the Mass celebrated at the high-altar, at which the deacon and subdeacon assisted. It is the Solemn Mass that is explained in this work.

"It may, however, be said that all the elements of the Solemn Mass, if deprived of their solemnity, are found, as it were, accumulated and condensed in the Low Mass. . . . As to the ceremonies, we find them much reduced in Low Mass; but as to the words they are integrally the same, with only this difference—that those passages sung at a High Mass are said at Low Mass" (Desloges).

Formerly Mass was said only on Sunday, the day of rest, and in the chief church of the place in which priests and faithful gathered together for prayer. In the fifth century Rome still kept this practice, in principle at least; for before the time of Pope St. Leo (†460) there is a special Mass for the station on the Wednesday and Friday Ember days; this then became the practice for all the days of Lent, except the Thursdays. These were added by Gregory II (†731). The custom of celebrating on Saturdays soon grew up and in the end each day of the week was honoured by the Holy Oblation. Nowadays Good Friday is the only day on which Mass is forbidden; then, however, is celebrated what is called *the Mass of the Presanctified*.[1]

For a very long time priests were allowed to celebrate several times on the same day. It is known that as late as the eighth century Pope Leo III was wont to offer up the Holy Sacrifice nine times a day. The dearth of priests and even private devotion authorized this custom. The occurrence of abuses resulted in the issue of prohibitions in this matter in the eleventh century. The only remaining traces of this practice are the three Masses that every priest is allowed to say on Christmas day and on All Souls' Day, as also the faculty given to certain priests of duplicating on Sundays—that is, of celebrating twice.

We must also observe that it was formerly the practice for several priests to celebrate together. On great feasts they used to proceed to the cathedral church, and there, conjointly with the Bishop, offer up the same Sacrifice. Even to this day the Greeks celebrate in this manner. The Latin Church observes this rite at the ordination of

[1] The Mass of *the Presanctified* is so called because the priest offers up at the altar and consumes at the Communion the Eucharistic Species which were consecrated the day, or even some days, before; he does not consecrate at all.

priests, when all the ordinands, in union with the consecrating Bishop, say the same Mass; it is their first Mass.

There is to be noticed, too, the rite of dry Mass (*Missa sicca*) which became widespread in the fourteenth century. It was made up of the prayers of the Mass without the offertory, consecration or communion. It was said when it was impossible to celebrate a real Mass or as thanksgiving. In some monasteries it was the rule for each monk, after the conventual Mass, to say a "dry Mass" in his cell.

Finally, let us remark that a priest is never allowed to celebrate alone. He ought to be assisted by a server, who, properly, should be a cleric—that is, one belonging to the clergy. Formerly the server was always a deacon; this word, in fact, means server. The scarcity of clerics eventually prevented the observance of this rubric. At a *Low Mass*, the server, if he wears a cassock, should put on a surplice as well whether he be tonsured or not. At this Mass there may be only one server; the rubrics and several Decrees of the Sacred Congregation are a proof of this. Two are *tolerated* for a solemnity. Women are forbidden to serve Mass; yet in the case of pressing necessity, they may answer, but only at a distance, outside the sanctuary, and without serving directly at the altar.

We can mention shortly a ceremony that is carried out nowadays only in certain dioceses and monasteries; the *procession* of the clergy within or outside the church. It is a ceremony of the greatest antiquity and takes place immediately before High Mass. In it may be found the explanation of the origin of the *Stations*, that is the meeting places of the faithful to which they went in procession and at which the holy Sacrifice was celebrated. The word *statio*, in the sense of a full assembly of clergy and of all

the faithful, has been kept in the ecclesiastical language of Rome to denote the Mass that the Pope celebrates on a certain day in one of the basilicas and at which all the clergy of Rome are present and to which all the faithful are summoned. The titular church of the station often determines the text of the Mass ; for example, the Epistle for Sexagesima Sunday, an extract which recounts St. Paul's great labours, is explained by the fact that on that day the liturgical station was held at St. Paul's-outside-the-Walls at Rome. Fortunately our modern Roman missal still notes the church of the station at the head of many of the proper Masses it contains. We should not be indifferent to these indications which recall the memory of the Roman basilicas and the saints to whom they are dedicated. A Christian should have a great devotion to the holy martyrs of the first ages of the Church.

Some authors see in the Sunday procession a relic of the ancient procession to the baptistery during the octave of Easter. A later development was the procession for the sprinkling of holy water.

§ 2. Parts of the Mass.

After these general considerations and before beginning the detailed study of the rites of the Roman Mass as they are to-day we must set out its principal parts and show how it is divided.

The present Roman Mass, preceded by a preparation (the prayers at the foot of the altar) is divided into two chief parts ; the *Mass of the Catechumens*[1] and the *Mass*

[1] The catechumens were aspirants to Baptism. They were only by degrees initiated into the mysteries of the faith and the ceremonies of worship ; thus they were only allowed to attend a part of the Holy Sacrifice.

of the Faithful. This will be clearly understood if we remember that the Mass of the Catechumens was really only an imitation of the readings given and explained in the ancient Jewish synagogue. The Church borrowed this didactic idea for her own Liturgy, and it became the Mass of the Catechumens ; she then added the Eucharistic Action to it, which was the Mass of the Faithful. The first extended from the Introit to the Offertory, while the second extended from the Offertory to the *Ite, Missa est,* and formed the Sacrifice properly so-called. We shall keep to this division, as it is both more historical and liturgical. As we have just explained, the word *Missa —Mass*—means *dismissal.* The expressions, " Mass of the Catechumens " (*Missa Catechumenorum*) and " Mass of the Faithful " (*Missa Fidelium*), originally designated the dismissal of the catechumens at the time of the Offertory, and that of the faithful at the end of the Sacrifice. Nowadays we look upon the first of these Masses as a solemn preparation for the second ; it comprises prayers and instructions. Whence its name of *prae-missa*—fore-Mass—not only because it precedes the real Mass but also because by its readings it directly prepares both the celebrant and the faithful for this *Mass of the Faithful.*

The preparation for Mass comprises the prayers recited by the priest and his ministers *at the foot of the altar.* They express sentiments of humble compunction.

The Mass of the Catechumens is that part of the holy Sacrifice which extends from the Introit to the Offertory. It is a collection of readings, chants and prayers in which the doctrinal note predominates ; it is meant to instruct us and to strengthen our faith.

The Mass of the Faithful extends from the Offertory to the *Ite, Missa est.* It is the sacrifice properly so-called

in which the soul is active in a continual and increasingly perfect act of love.

If it is considered how communion is the natural complement of holy Mass it will be understood that there is no preparation for it comparable to the three great acts of humility, faith and love that are given expression in the holy Sacrifice.

We shall now study these three parts of the Mass in detail.

THE ORDINARY OF THE MASS

The invariable or almost invariable part of the Mass is called *Ordinary of the Mass*; it is contained in the *Ordo Missæ*, that is, the text of the usual prayers and rites of Mass as distinguished from the *Proper*, the variable part, which is appropriate to the mystery or feast that is being celebrated.

The Ordinary of the Roman Mass is made up, largely, of the elements of the papal Mass of the eighth century, as it is to be found in the *Ordo Romanus I* and the Gregorian Sacramentary. Between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries there crept into this Ordinary (as it was adapted for *Low Mass*) certain prayers of a private character at the following points: the arrival of the priest at the altar, the offertory, the communion, the end of Mass.

Our present *Ordinary*, in its general lines, was becoming fixed by about the thirteenth century; it is definitive in the *editio princeps* of the Roman Missal printed in 1474 at Milan and finally sanctioned in the official Missal of the Roman Church which, promised and prepared for by the Council of Trent, was published finally by Pope St. Pius V in 1570.

As may be seen, this Ordinary of the Mass is a venerable monument; may it not be said that it is the most sacred formulary by which God is invoked and called down upon this earth?

THE PREPARATION

As we begin this explanation of and commentary on holy Mass it seems of capital importance to remind ourselves at the outset of what the Church teaches about its attendant rites and ceremonies. In our Missals, in letters of gold, should be inscribed these words of the holy Council of Trent:

> *Man's nature is such that without external helps he raises himself with difficulty to the contemplation of things divine. That is why the Church, like a loving mother, has instituted certain rites and ceremonies in accordance with which at Mass some prayers are said in a low voice and others aloud. In the same way, following the ordinances of the apostles and of tradition she has instituted ceremonies, blessings, lights, incense, vestments and many things of this nature to keep in mind the majesty of so great a sacrifice, and also to stir the souls of the faithful to raise themselves up, through these outward signs of religion and piety, to the contemplation of those tremendous things hidden in this sacrifice* (Sess. XXII, c. 5).

The Prayers at the Foot of the Altar.

The prayers said by the priest at the foot of the altar are a comparatively recent introduction, as we shall see; moreover their character is rather that of a private preparation for the holy Sacrifice.

These prayers are: the *Sign of the Cross;* the *Introibo* and the Psalm *Judica me;* the *Confiteor*, with the *Invocations;* and, finally, the two prayers *Aufer a nobis* and

Oramus te, which the priest recites on ascending the altar steps. All these prayers, together with the *Incensing of the Altar*, prepare for the great Act.

The preparation for the Sacrifice of the Mass, as we have just said, was formerly left to each one's devotion. Before the ninth century the Church gave no definite directions about these prayers.[1] The Missals but rarely mention them, and the first *Ordos* or *Roman Rituals* are silent on the matter. No rubric, moreover, determines where they were to be said. The priest said them as he put on the vestments or afterwards ; later on he said them on his way to the altar. In some churches—for example, in Tours, at the tomb of St. Martin—they were recited in a private chapel ; at Chartres they were said in the choir ; at Soissons at the entrance of the sanctuary ; the Carthusians recite them at the Gospel side of the altar ; at Rheims they were said in the sacristy. These prayers are, therefore, of comparatively recent introduction. They have always been substantially the same, expressing sentiments of confidence in God, confession of sin, and repentance begging for mercy. They are grouped around the *Confiteor* as its preparation or completion. They are intended to merit the grace of purity, so that the priest may worthily ascend to the altar and the faithful present thereon their gifts.

The Introibo and the Psalm Judica me.

The priest, having come to the foot of the altar, says, making the sign of the Cross :

[1] Even nowadays for their prayers at the foot of the altar the Dominicans say merely the verse *Confitemini Domino*, the *Confiteor* and the *Adjutorium nostrum*. Religious orders, like the Carthusians and the Premonstratensians, as well as the churches of Milan, Lyons and Toledo were not obliged to adopt the Roman Missal of 1570 because they were in possession of a " use " or rite of their own with a prescription of at least 200 years in its favour.

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Amen.	In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

It was the custom in the early Church to begin no important action without making the sign of the Cross in order to show that all things were done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. Now this sign was usually accompanied by the formula *In nomine Patris et Filii*, etc. in order at the same time to invoke the blessed Trinity. The custom arose of making the sign of the Cross whenever the Trinity was invoked ; and that is so at Mass whether the three divine Persons are invoked directly or merely named.

The sign of the Cross is made at this place in the Mass because it marks the beginning of an action of importance, but it is also the invocation of the Three Persons. In some churches as the sign of the Cross was made the following formula was recited : *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti sit signatum et consecratum et benedictum hoc sacrificium*—May this sacrifice be signed, consecrated and blessed in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The sign of the Cross is made here, as it is the commencement of a new Act. Often during the Holy Sacrifice we shall meet with similar cases—for example, at the *Adjutorium*, which follows. This *Adjutorium* is " the beginning of a part[1] which was inserted later, and which used to exist separately " (Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*).

By the words accompanying the sign of the Cross the priest announces to the faithful that he is about to renew the memory of the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

[1] i.e. the *Confiteor* and accompanying absolution.

With his ministers he then says the following antiphon :

Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam.	I will go unto the altar of God, to God, who giveth joy to my youth.

St. Ambrose says the above words were put by Holy Church into the mouth of the neophytes as they proceeded from the baptismal fonts to the altar to receive the Body of the Lord. They were, in the words of St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 2), "*as new-born infants, without guile*"—beautiful in youth and innocence.

The priest also, drawing near to God's altar, will enter into communion with the Most High, and by this contact his "*youth shall be renewed like the eagle's*" (Ps. cii. 5), and his soul transported. And this too should be the disposition of each one of the faithful present at the holy sacrifice at which as we shall see later they are, *after their own manner,* priests together with the priest who celebrates.

At the same time, remembering that he is but a man, he is humbled at the feet of his Lord by the knowledge of his own frailty and unworthiness : "*Judica me, Deus* . . . Judge me, O God . . .," and he continues with his ministers the recitation of this magnificent forty-second Psalm, in which, like the prophet, he avows alike his fear, desire, and confidence :

PSALM XLII.

Judica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta : ab homine iniquo, et doloso erue me.	Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy : deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.
Quia tu es, Deus, fortitudo mea: quare me repulisti, et quare tristis incedo, dum affligit me inimicus?	For Thou, O God, art my strength, why hast Thou cast me off? And why do I go sorrowful, whilst the enemy afflicteth me ?

Emitte lucem tuam, et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt, et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua.

Send forth Thy light and Thy truth; they have conducted me, and brought me to Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles.

Et introibo ad altare Dei: ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.

And I will go unto the altar of God; to God, who giveth joy to my youth.

Confitebor tibi in cithara, Deus, Deus meus: quare tristis es anima mea, et quare conturbas me?

I will praise Thee upon the harp, O God, my God; why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?

Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi: salutare vultus mei, et Deus meus.

Hope in God, for I will still praise Him, the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui sancto.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The priest again says the antiphon: "*Introibo ad altare Dei* . . . I will go unto the altar of God."

The Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries, the old Roman *Ordines*, the ancient liturgies make no mention of the psalm *Judica me* nor of the Confession which follows it. The private devotion of certain bishops gradually introduced these prayers into the liturgy.

This forty-second Psalm was in use in some churches, Troyes particularly, as early as the ninth century and has been used by the Roman Church from the eleventh century. Innocent III mentioned this psalm; and Paul III (1550) ordered the priest to say it aloud or in a low voice before going to the altar. Some authors think that, until the time of St. Pius V, who in the sixteenth century reformed the Missal, its use was merely a matter of devotion. This Pope, however, made its recitation compulsory. At Masses for the Dead and during Passiontide it is omitted. A mystic reason is given by some authors

for this omission. One of the verses expresses joy, and this is thought to be unfitting for days when sadness predominates. Perhaps the omission of the *Gloria Patri* has led to the omission of the psalm. But probably the historical explanation is the right one. For the Mass of the Dead and the Masses of Passiontide, more than others, have retained the ancient simplicity of rite. The psalm *Judica*, a more recent institution at this point, has not been added to these two offices still so redolent of the austere charm of the primitive liturgy. It should be remembered, too, that the liturgy of this season remained more firmly established in popular sentiment, and its simplicity is in accord with the central idea of this time. Thus there was no need to add to it new rites whose purpose very often is to recall and emphasize ideas that were originally well understood.

At the beginning of the fifth century in Rome the two verses of the doxology (*Gloria Patri* and *Sicut erat*) were added to the psalms, but the verse *Sicut erat* is later than the *Gloria Patri*. In primitive times they were held to refer to God the Son. The council of Vaison (529) ordered them to be recited in opposition to the Arians. They are not part of the *Gloria Patri* in the East. But what a magnificent prayer these two verses form ! They are an acknowledgement of the *intrinsic* glory of the blessed Trinity, of that glory which is its Life, the Life of the Trinity of Persons in the unity of the One God ; and they are the expression of our ardent desire for the *extrinsic* glory of this adorable Trinity, that glory which is given by every ascription of the creature to God.

Let us all, then, make use of this Psalm, so full of unction, uniting ourselves to the priest, who has in his heart the desires and sentiments of the whole congregation.

The Adjutorium Nostrum.

The priest signs himself and says :

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini, qui fecit cælum et terram.	Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

This versicle occurs very often in the liturgy. It is placed always at the beginning of prayers or functions that are complete in themselves or form an integral part of a more important function. It is therefore an introductory ritual formula. It is a necessary prelude to the *Confiteor*, as may be seen at Prime or Compline. It expresses and asserts the need we have of God's help to carry out the action it introduces ; in that sense it is a prayer, at least by implication. Now, all our petitions for grace are made through the merits of the Cross of Jesus Christ ; and so the priest signs himself at the *Adjutorium* ; it appears as the beginning of a new action and this implies, as we have shown, the sign of the Cross—a request that what we are about to undertake may be enveloped in grace.

The Confiteor.

The *Confiteor*, or *Public Confession*, is found in all ancient liturgies. Like the Psalm *Judica me*, it did not in early times form part of the Mass properly so-called. It was a prayer which could usefully be said before the Holy Sacrifice and according to one's devotion, as is proved by the Eastern liturgies of St. Mark, St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom or the *Apologies* or *Confessions* of the Latins—prayers by which priests apologized for presuming to carry out such sacred mysteries.

The form of this general and public confession has varied considerably. Originally, as the Apologies show, it was

left to the improvisation of the celebrant. Gradually it took definitive form, but the old liturgical books do not mention it. In several Missals the versicle *Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus* (taken from Psalm 117 : praise of that mercy which is here implored) is used to introduce the Confession. "According to some," says Grancolas, "the Confession or *Confiteor* is introduced by *Confitemini Domino* and then the *Confiteor* was added to it." That is still the custom with the Dominicans. They begin with *Confitemini Domino* ; there follows a very short form of *Confiteor*, approximating to a still shorter form that may be found in the Customs of Cluny and which runs : *Confiteor Deo et omnibus sanctis ejus, et vobis fratres quia peccavi in cogitatione, locutione et operatione, mea culpa* ; *precor vos, orate pro me.* The Carthusians, the Calced Carmelites, have a very similar form but they (and the Dominicans) add the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For, it should be noticed, it was only very gradually that the saints' names were added to the *Confiteor* ; and among these saints occur very often the names of those whose relics are in the altar stone. In olden days there was great devotion to these saints. *Mea culpa*, as a rule, was only said once, and after this the *Confiteor* came to a rapid conclusion with a short request for the prayers of the brethren. An endless number of forms of the *Confiteor* may be found, all of them different, and it may be asserted that before the present form was fixed each church had its own. The old Paris Pontifical, for example, lays down that after the versicle *Confitemini* the bishop shall say the *Confiteor* using the form that he is accustomed to, *secundum consuetudinem suam*. The form now in use in the Roman Church dates from the twelfth century. It was prescribed by St. Pius V, and must be recited at the foot of the altar. It is that which is given in all our Missals :

Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus sanctis, et vobis, fratres (the ministers say: *et tibi, pater*), *quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opere; mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaelem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes sanctos, et vos fratres* (*et te, pater*), *orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum.*

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary over Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the Saints, and to you, brethren (to you, Father), that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the Saints, and you, brethren (and you, Father), to pray to the Lord our God for me.

The ministers, in their own name and that of the faithful, answer :

Miseratur tui omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis tuis, perducat te ad vitam æternam.

May Almighty God be merciful to thee, forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to everlasting life.

The priest answers : *Amen.*

The ministers then recite the *Confiteor*, after which the priest says the above prayer, adding for himself and the people :

Indulgentiam, absolutionem et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum, tribuat nobis omnipotens, et misericors Dominus.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution and remission of our sins.

The ministers answer : *Amen.*

In the Mozarabic Missal these two prayers are called *Absolutio ad populum*, like a public absolution given by the priest to the assembled faithful. That is why, too, at the *Indulgentiam* and the accompanying sign of the

Cross the priest used to turn a little towards the people. This sign of the Cross originated in the *In nomine Patris*, etc. which at one time immediately followed the *Indulgentiam*.

It should be pointed out that the *Indulgentiam* is one of the Sacramentals. This prayer moves God to impart sorrow to the penitent over whom it is said and so allow him to merit the pardon of his sins.

Then alternately the priest and his ministers proceed :

P. Deus, tu conversus vivificabis nos,	*P.* O God, being turned again, Thou wilt quicken us,
M. Et plebs tua lætabitur in te.	*M.* And Thy people shall rejoice in Thee.
P. Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam,	*P.* Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy,
M. Et salutare tuum da nobis.	*M.* And grant us Thy salvation.
P. Domine, exaudi orationem meam,	*P.* O Lord, hear my prayer,
M. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.	*M.* And let my cry come unto Thee.

What is the spirit of all these prayers ? They tend to excite in our hearts compunction. Truly the first sacrifice to be offered to God is a contrite and humble heart. The priest is the first to acknowledge, and that publicly, that he is a sinner, and that he has offended much in thought, word, and deed ; he even abases himself so far as to ask the faithful to pray for him. As befits a sinner, during the whole of the *Confiteor* he keeps his hands joined together, and remains bowed down. During the *Misereatur*, which follows, he still maintains this humble posture, because this prayer is made for the priest humbled before God.

In their turn the faithful enter into these same senti ments. Together with the ministers, and through them

they bow down and confess their sins ; after which both priest and faithful mutually express their repentance, and beseech Almighty God for the forgiveness of their offences.

What humility there is in this *mea culpa*, thrice repeated by all ! When we strike our breasts, full of contrition for our sins, we almost seem to say that we desire to break our hearts, that God may make new hearts of them, hearts more pleasing to Himself.

A learned liturgist points out that in order to humble ourselves the more we do not confess our sins to God alone ; we acknowledge our guilt before the whole court of heaven and the assembled faithful. We humble ourselves particularly before the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Queen of heaven ; before St. Michael, prince of the heavenly host ; before St. John Baptist, the blessed fore-runner of Christ and patron of the Lateran basilica, mother of the churches of the world ; before St. Peter and St. Paul, those princes and patrons of the universal and Roman Church ; in general, before all the saints of heaven and all our assembled brethren. This we do in order the more effectively to humble ourselves and to plead for their intercession.

How efficacious in God's eyes is such a prayer ! There is no doubt that it goes straight to Him, for, in the words of the Holy Ghost, "*the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds*" (Ecclus. xxxv. 21). How confident also is this urgent and mutual supplication, addressed to Him who makes souls rejoice, and reserves for them the salvation besought at the foot of His altar.

After the *Indulgentiam* quoted above, a rubric was once observed, which is now only met with in the Bishop's Mass which, as we know, has retained many primitive rites, especially of the papal Mass. For it was at this moment

that the subdeacon who had used the Pontiff's *mappula* or maniple to signal to the *Schola Cantorum* gave it back to the Pope. Up to the thirteenth century it was only at this moment the priest put the maniple on his left arm. This was on account of the much larger size of the ancient chasubles, which, as we have seen, used to cover and, after a manner, envelop the whole of the priest's body. The priest went up to the altar without raising his arms. The Confession ended, he tucked up the chasuble and received on his arm the maniple, which was not needed until then.

After the last verses of the prayer already explained, the priest says : " *Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you," and the ministers answer : " *Et cum spiritu tuo*—And with your spirit."

This salutation, so often occurring in the Liturgy, was used by the Hebrews. Booz, the husband of Ruth, greeted the reapers with " *The Lord be with you* " (Ruth ii. 4). It was the customary greeting of St. Paul to the Christians. He addresses the wish, " *the Lord be with thy spirit,*" to his disciple, St. Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 22).

Generally this mutual salutation between priest and people announces an important prayer. It signifies that the priest receives the desires of the faithful, and is about to speak to God on their behalf. But before he formulates his prayer, he says to them : " *May the Lord be with you,*" to inspire you to ask aright ; and the people answer : "*May He also be with your spirit,*" whilst you offer up our petitions.

The Aufer a nobis and the Oramus te.

The priest raises his hands, as though to seek help from Heaven, and then says in an audible voice : " *Oremus—Let us pray.*" Accompanied by the deacon and subdeacon, he

ascends the altar steps, reciting on his own behalf and that of his ministers the following prayer :

Aufer a nobis, quæsumus, Domine, iniquitates nostras, ut ad Sancta sanctorum puris mereamur mentibus introire. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Take away from us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our iniquities, that we may be worthy to enter with pure minds into the Holy of Holies. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

All liturgies prescribe a prayer for the priest as he approaches the altar. The Eastern liturgy of St. James has the following : " Lord Jesus, purify us from every sin ; make us stand without stain at Thy holy altar there to offer Thee the sacrifice of praise—we are in fear and trembling before Thy altar."

The prayer *Aufer a nobis* is a shortened form of the long " Apologies " that priests used to make as they drew near to the altar : in olden times it was held in very high esteem as the place holy above all others. The Leonine Sacramentary (fifth century) and the Gelasian contain this prayer among the *Orationes et preces a Quinquagesima usque Quadragesimam* but instead of *mentibus* they put *sensibus* ; that little substitution contains valuable teaching for us. The Gregorian Sacramentary appoints it for the Dedication of churches. The old Missals also contain it. In the *Missa Illyrici* this prayer comes before the psalm *Judica*, in the *Micrologus* it precedes the *Confiteor*.

The priest begs from God, not merely the pardon, but also the obliteration of his own faults, and those of his ministers, so that neither trace nor impression may be left of them in mind, imagination, or senses. He enters the Holy of Holies, the secrecy of the sanctuary, where he will converse with God alone. He penetrates, like Moses, into the cloud ; and to signify this mystery the ancient rituals

ordered the priest to take leave here of the people by turning to them and saying : " *Brethren, pray for me !* "

The priest, having gone up to the altar, says secretly the following prayer :

Oramus te, Domine, per merita Sanctorum tuorum, quorum reliquiæ hic sunt, et omnium Sanctorum, ut indulgere digneris omnia peccata mea. Amen.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy Saints whose relics are here, and of all the Saints, that Thou wouldst deign to pardon all my sins. Amen.

At the words, " *whose relics are here,*" he kisses the altar. The *Ordo Romanus I* of the eighth century mentions that the Pope kisses the altar and the book of the Gospels and gives the kiss of peace to his ministers. A bishop still kisses the Gospels, the image of the Incarnate Word, at this point. At Cîteaux the priest kissed the altar and crossed himself ; the deacon kissed the Gospel corner of the altar. Other Missals prescribe the same thing. In the liturgy the kiss is a salute, a sign of respect, says St. Jerome. For does not the altar hold the Body and Blood of Our Lord, and is it not, according to St. Ambrose, a figure of this Body ? St. Athanasius compares those who kiss the altar with reverence to the woman of the Gospel who with faith touched Our Lord's garment. This kiss, then, is intended for Jesus Christ.

The priest kisses also the altar to venerate the precious remains of the holy bodies that are enclosed therein. Every time he turns to the faithful he will kiss the altar, to signify that he receives the peace of Jesus Christ, and transmits the same to them.

In the *Oramus te* the priest for the last time implores, through the merits of all the Saints, the forgiveness of his sins.

This prayer is very ancient. It dates from the end of the ninth century.

The priest, filled with compunction, has gone up to the altar. But repentance is the mother of joy ; so the hearts of all are full of hope. Incense will now be wafted towards Heaven, canticles will resound, and prayers rise up to God.

PART ONE

MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS:

INSTRUCTION

From the Introit to the Offertory.

The parts of the Mass were explained above. "As our Lord gives Himself to men in two ways to be the food of their souls—by His words and by His adorable flesh—so the Mass is naturally divided into two chief parts.

"In the first it is the Word of God which is put before the congregation; and as this word is intended also for those who have not yet entered into the fold of the Divine Shepherd—those whom He is calling, whom He goes out to seek—this first part of the Mass is called the Mass of the Catechumens because they are summoned to it and allowed to be present at it.

"After this first part follows the Mass of the Faithful, that is, the sacrifice properly so-called" (Dom Gréa, *op. cit.*).

The distinction between Catechumens and Faithful has no longer the same consequences at holy Mass as it had in the primitive Church. It is useful to bear it in mind, however, in order the better to understand the Mass, and particularly this first part. Since the Mass is the Memorial of Our Lord's Passion it is a reminder, in this first part, of His discourse at the Last Supper. Every morning at Mass we can gather from Christ's lips some of those wonderful last lessons of our Master, of Him who is the only one to whom we should listen.

Originally this Mass had, above all, a doctrinal and

didactic character, for at it readings were given which were frequently commented upon, and which were intended to instruct the congregation. Mgr. Batiffol quotes St. Justin (2nd century): "On the day called of the Sun an assembly takes place of all who live in the town and the country; the commentaries of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time allows. Then, when the reader has stopped, the president speaks in order to instruct (those who are present) and to exhort them to take to heart such excellent lessons. Then we all stand up together and send up prayers, and as I have said, when we have finished the prayer bread is brought and wine" (Justin, *Apology*, lxvii, 3–5). There we have the first part of our Mass described by a Christian in Rome in the middle of the second century. Soon there were added to these readings certain prayers, which we find nowadays under the form of the *Introit*, the *Kyrie eleison*, the *Gloria in excelsis*, and the *Collect*. We shall explain these different prayers and instructions in the order in which they occur in the *Ordinary of the Roman Mass*.

The Incensing of the Altar.

As soon as the celebrant has kissed the altar, and has recited the prayer *Oramus* the deacon presents the incense, saying: "*Benedicite, Pater reverende*—A blessing, reverend Father." Notice these expressions of respect. The priest is a father, the spiritual father of all the congregation around him.

Let us note, moreover, that each time the deacon passes anything to the priest he kisses first the object, then the priest's hand. On taking it back, he kisses the hand first and then the object. All this is done in token of profound respect both for the person of him who represents

Christ and for the object which is being used in the Holy Sacrifice.

In Masses for the Dead the deacon, as a sign of repentance and sorrow, does not kiss anything.

The celebrant puts incense into the thurible, saying:

Ab illo benedicaris in cujus honore cremaberis. — Mayest thou be blessed by Him in whose honour thou art to be burnt.

Before blessing the incense he joins his hands—that is, he first prays—for the priest only blesses in the Name of God. In thus joining his hands he seems to call down this benediction. Then, taking the thurible, he incenses in silence the cross, the relics exposed on the altar, the upper part, the surface, the front, and both sides of the altar. In olden times the priest, after having incensed the surface of the altar, handed the thurible to the deacon, who then made the circuit of the consecrated stone, incensing it meanwhile in every direction. The construction of our altars renders this generally impossible, so the priest supplies it by incensing as has been described.

The altar is incensed twice during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—at this point and at the Offertory. Of this latter incensing we shall speak in its proper place.

It should be observed that the incensing here is—at least, in our Liturgy—scarcely as ancient as that at the Offertory. Indeed, it does not occur in the Mass for the Dead, which, as we have mentioned above, has preserved in its rites much of the primitive simplicity. It appears, however, from the *Ordinary of Monte Cassino*, that towards the year 1100 it was already carried out in many places. As to the Greeks, they incense the altar during a considerable part of the Mass. At Rome incense was always carried in the Introit procession. That may be the origin of this first incensing at Mass. The *Ordo Romanus VI* (XIth

century) implies that the celebrant himself puts the incense into the thurible ; from that to the blessing with the sign of the Cross, and a prayer giving expression to this blessing, is but a step.

Let us add that this incensing seems to have been introduced in order to recall in some way the rite of the consecration of an altar. Now, we have seen that this rite prescribes the almost constant incensing of the altar to be consecrated, and that this is done to show veneration to it. A legitimate reason would seem to authorize this incensing in the Mass. Indeed, as we have explained, the altar in the sanctuary is the object of a very special veneration. The priest has just kissed it with love, because he has thought of the Christ whom it recalls to him. At the same time, it would seem, he feels the necessity of honouring and purifying this table, to which he has drawn near for the purpose of accomplishing such great things upon it. Like Magdalen on the eve of the Sacrifice of the Cross, he perfumes the feet of Him whom we shall see in a few moments renewing the mysteries of His Passion. By its virtue this incense attracts and fixes the attention of the Almighty upon the altar ; and all that will be said and done there will savour of its perfume. The altar being now prepared, God may descend upon it.

While the celebrant is incensing the altar, the deacon and subdeacon each hold up a corner of his chasuble. For this rubric there was once a practical reason. The ancient chasuble used to cover the whole body, and so, in order to use his hands freely, the priest used to gather it over his arms. That he might not be inconvenienced in his movements, he needed the assistance of his ministers, who lifted the chasuble from behind or prevented it from falling on to his arms in front.

After the incensing of the altar, the priest himself is

incensed by the deacon : this is a general rule. It is a mark of respect ; for does not the priest represent Jesus Christ ?

The Introit.

Opening our Missal at the Mass for the First Sunday in Advent, what do we read there ? First, *Introit*, then a text, a verse, the *Gloria Patri* and the first text repeated. What is the meaning of all this ?

The *Introit*, from the Latin *introitus—an entry*—is a chant which was formerly executed by the choir, whilst the celebrant, his preparation being made, left the sacristy accompanied by his ministers, and entered the sanctuary. As there is no entry on Holy Saturday and at the Solemn Mass on Whitsun-eve no *Introit* is sung. We have said above that the prayers which are now recited at the foot of the altar were of old only a preparation for the Mass.

Here used to take place a ceremony of which there remains now only a relic in the Pontifical Mass. On entering the sanctuary, the Bishop met the deacon who presented to him the *Sancta*. By *Sancta* was meant a particle, which had been reserved from the preceding Sacrifice. The Bishop bowed himself down in adoration. We shall see later what was done with this particle. This rite has now disappeared, yet the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which the celebrating Bishop makes before entering the choir, recalls it.

" In every rite the celebrant's entry was from an early time associated with some pomp. We shall not go far wrong, however, if we refer to the fifth century, at the earliest, the majority of the details which have just been described " (Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, pp. 63–4, English translation).

The *Introit* was composed of an *antiphon*,[1] which was originally a verse taken from the Psalm that was to follow it. This Psalm was chanted—either the whole or a great part of it—until the celebrant reached the altar, when the singing stopped. Since the eleventh century the antiphon is followed by only one verse of the Psalm and the *Gloria Patri*, after which the antiphon is repeated. It was not the custom for the celebrant—at least, before the year 900—to recite the *Introit*, nor, indeed, anything else that was chanted by the choir. At Rome until the fourteenth century the Schola alone sang the *Introit* at High Mass. The introduction of Low Mass, which is of comparatively recent origin, led to the priest taking the place of the choir—a practice which has even extended to High Masses, and has since become obligatory. We shall find later a similar case with regard to the Gospel. The involved musical settings often mutilated the sacred text; the celebrant was obliged to make up what had been left out by saying it all. That is, it seems, the principal reason for this practice.

On beginning the *Introit* the priest signs himself with the sign of the Cross, for it is here really that the Mass properly so-called begins. Now, at the commencement of every fresh action or prayer, the early Christians, as already stated, were wont to make the sign of the Cross. In certain churches—for instance, at Laon—the sign of the Cross made at the *Introit* was accompanied with the words: "*Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*—Our help is in

[1]On account of its etymology, *antiphon* may be said to apply to anything chanted alternately by different voices, such as hymns or Psalms. Nowadays this word is restricted to an extract drawn from Holy Scripture, or from ecclesiastical writings, and which serves as a heading to a Psalm. The whole choir chants it before and after the Psalm. Of old such an antiphon was repeated after each verse of the Psalm, just like the Invitatory at Matins.

the Name of the Lord " ; in others with : "*In nomine Patris —In the Name of the Father . . .* " as at St. Remy's in Rheims. The prayers have disappeared, but the sign of the Cross has remained.

In Masses for the Dead the priest also makes the sign of the Cross ; but, as the words with which he begins apply very specially to the dead, he cannot himself benefit by the benediction implored by the *Introit ;* therefore, instead of signing himself, the priest makes the sign of the Cross over the Missal, applying the blessing to the dead.

The *Introit* is a portion of the Liturgy very deep in meaning, for we may expect to find it giving the keynote of the feast being celebrated or expressing the sentiments proper to the liturgical season. We should read it in union with the priest and imbue ourselves with the thoughts it expresses. But to read it well we should meditate upon it ; unfortunately the habit of deep, careful meditation on a sacred text is one that has largely been lost.

The Kyrie eleison.

This invocation, which immediately follows the *Introit*, is composed of two Greek words meaning " *Lord, have mercy* ! [*on us*]." It does not occur in the West before the sixth century. This formula was originally the reply of the people to another, which was called the Litany, introduced at Rome about the year 500.

The *Kyrie*, a very Roman feature, in popular use, is, then, a relic of the prayer in litany form which, it appears, was originally the beginning of the sacrificial liturgy. The truth of this assertion is shown by the fact that in the eighth century the *Kyrie* was omitted from the Mass on station days, ordination days or others when the litany

in its entirety had already been sung. Even to-day the *Kyrie eleison* at Mass on Holy Saturday is nothing else than the conclusion of the litany with which that Mass begins.

The singing of the *Kyrie* is common to the Greeks and to the Latins. The former use it much more frequently than we do. Among the Latins it is sung alternately by clergy and faithful. As early as 529, at the time of the Second Council of Vaison, it was the custom in the East, at Rome, and all over Italy to say the *Kyrie* "with great love and compunction." At Milan, for instance, where the Ambrosian Rite is followed, there are three *Kyries* after the *Gloria in Excelsis*, three after the Gospel, and three more after the ablutions. In the days of St. Gregory the Great, in the sixth century, the Roman Rite ordered the *Kyrie eleison* to be sung alternately with the *Christe eleison* until the Bishop made a sign to stop.

St. Gregory, writing to John, Bishop of Syracuse, seems to imply that the full petitions of the litany were omitted "at the daily Masses." The people kept all the more tenaciously to their own part, *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison.* On more solemn occasions the whole litany was sung. From about the ninth century the number of these invocations has been reduced to nine. The three first *Kyries* are addressed to God the Father, the three *Christes* to God the Son, and the three last *Kyries* to God the Holy Ghost.

At the Rogation processions in Rome in the twelfth century these invocations were repeated as many as three, five, or even seven times; it appears that it was the Introit that gradually took the place of the litany which is now reduced to *Kyrie* and *Christe eleison.* We may notice that on Easter-eve and Whitsun-eve, the days on which this litany is still said, there is no Introit. The *Gloria in*

excelsis has exercised a like influence on it, for in fact the litany appears when the *Gloria* is not habitually said.

This formula, "*Lord, have mercy on us,*" is of frequent occurrence in Holy Scripture. It should be for us one of those simple but fervent prayers which, as arrows, go straight to the heart of the Almighty. St. Benedict calls it very rightly the "supplication of the litany." The Gregorian melody accompanying and embellishing these invocations helps us to realize that they are so many flights towards Heaven. Let us say them again and again, using them with faith, as did the needy in the Gospel.

It may be useful to mention the so-called *farced Kyries*. By farcing is meant the introduction of words (or tropes) beneath the long neums or groups of notes in the *Kyrie* or other chants of the Mass. In the Middle Ages this practice was carried to excess. The *Kyriale* in the recent Vatican Gradual has kept the names of these farcings at the head of the different Masses. Thus we have: *Lux et Origo* (1), the well-known *Kyrie, Fons bonitatis* (2), *Cum jubilo* for feasts of Our Lady (9), etc. There is reproduced here an example of these farced *Kyries*, in honour of the Mother of God, to be found in an old Missal printed in 1531 at the famous Benedictine monastery of St. Martin in the diocese of Lyons:

Kyrie, ter virginum amator Deus Mariæ decus, *eleison.*

Kyrie, qui de stirpe regia claram producis Mariam, *eleison.*

Kyrie, preces ejus suscipe dignas pro mundo fusas, *eleison.*

Christe, Deus de Patre, homo natus de Maria Matre, *eleison.*

Christe, quem de ventre beata Maria edidit mundo, *eleison.*

Christe, sume laudes nostras Mariæ almæ dicatas, *eleison.*

Kyrie, O Paraclite obumbrans pectus Mariæ, *eleison.*

Kyrie, qui facis dignum thalamum pectus Mariæ, *eleison.*

Kyrie, qui supra cælos Spiritus levas Mariam : fac nos post ipsam scandere tua virtute Spiritus alme, *eleison.*

. Lord, God, threefold lover of virgins, splendour of Mary, have mercy.

Lord, who didst create Mary from a royal line, have mercy.

Lord, receive the good prayers she offers for the whole world, have mercy.

Christ, God born of the Father, man born of the Mother Mary, have mercy.

Christ, whom the womb of blessed Mary gave to the world, have mercy.

Christ, accept the honours that we pay to blessed Mary, have mercy.

Lord, Paraclete, overshadowing the womb of Mary, have mercy.

Lord, who didst make this womb of Mary a fit nuptial chamber, have mercy.

Lord, Holy Spirit, who didst raise Mary above the heavens, make us to follow after her by thy power, O loving Spirit, have mercy.

The Gloria in excelsis.

The *Gloria in excelsis*, like the *Kyrie* to which it was originally joined as the completion of the Litany, is a sacred hymn of Greek origin ; traces of it are found as early as the second century. To the words of the Angels were added, before the sixth century, acclamations to God the Father ; finally, the controversies on the subject

of the Divinity of the two other Divine Persons led to further additions, and thus it became a hymn to the Most Holy Trinity. Primitively it was used as a morning prayer.

For a long time it was permitted to chant the *Gloria in excelsis* only at Christmas—at the beginning of the midnight Mass. About the year 500, Pope Symmachus extended this privilege to Sundays and to the Feasts of Martyrs, but for Bishops only; priests might recite it only on Easter day. It was only at the end of the eleventh century that the faculty was conceded generally to priests.

When is the *Gloria in excelsis* said?

The *Gloria in excelsis* and the *Te Deum*, in the ancient Liturgy, were often closely connected. Originally the *Gloria* was chanted at the end of Lauds; then it was replaced by the *Te Deum*, which was soon transposed to *Matins*, the *Gloria* being reserved for Mass.

The *Gloria in excelsis* is said at Mass whenever the Roman Office enjoins the *Te Deum* at Matins. It is also recited on Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday, owing to the solemnity of these days.

It is not said in any of the Votive Masses, with the exception of that of the Blessed Virgin on Saturday, that of the Angels, and solemn votive Masses that are not celebrated in violet vestments. As early as the eleventh century the Church drew up a special Office in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and little by little a full Office with the *Te Deum* at Matins; and, in accordance with the rubric, the *Gloria in excelsis* is said at Mass on the Saturdays when this Office is recited. It is also the canticle of the Angels, because they sang the first phrase of it above the crib of the Infant God, whence the name *Angelic Hymn* given to this prayer. Finally, it is sung in solemn votive Masses to mark the solemnity.

It is omitted in Masses for the Dead, and during Advent and from Septuagesima until Easter in Masses of the *Proper of the Season*,[1] to signify the spirit of penance and sadness predominant on these days. Anciently it was omitted even on feasts in Lent. From the beginning of the twelfth century we see the Popes giving, by special Bull, permission to some monasteries to chant the *Angelic Hymn* on feasts in Lent—for example, on May 10, 1119, to the Abbey of Tournus, and on March 22, 1275, to that of Bonne Espérance.

One word more concerning the rubrics which regulate the recitation of this canticle. The priest, at the centre of the altar, extends his hands, raises them towards Heaven, and then rejoins them. This he always does when he wishes to show his love of heavenly things or more earnestly to implore grace. He bows his head at the word *Deo* out of respect for the holy Name of God, and likewise at the words *adoramus te, gratias agimus tibi*, and *suscipe deprecationem nostram*, which clearly express the principal ends of the Sacrifice. The priest finishes the Angelic Hymn with the sign of the Cross, probably in reverence to the Blessed Trinity whose names he utters.

We shall now give this beautiful hymn:

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis, Deus

Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God

[1] The distinction between *Proper of the Season* and the *Proper of the Saints* is this: the *Proper of the Season* contains the Offices and Masses of the movable part of the liturgical year, namely, that which the varying date of the feast of Easter regulates. In this *Proper* are found the greater part of the solemnities of the year and of the liturgical seasons which prepare it—Advent, Lent, and the time after Pentecost. The *Proper of the Saints* contains the Offices and Masses celebrated in honour of Our Lady and the Saints.

Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe ; Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers. Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Angelic Hymn begins with an exclamation which governs the whole theme of praise developed at length in the two following sections : *Glory be to God in the highest* is a theme of thanksgiving, *on earth peace to men of good-will* is one of supplication. For in this hymn there are two things : thanksgiving to God the Father, who is honoured through the work of the Redemption of fallen man, and supplication to God the Son, who realizes and perfects in us His pacifying Redemption. That is a perfect summary of the whole Mass : *Glory to God, peace to men.*

The thought of the first section, *Laudamus te* . . . etc., is concentrated around the phrase : *Gratias agimus tibi, propter magnam gloriam tuam.* It is this great glory which goes up to the heavenly Father ; it is all creation, the Incarnation-Redemption, the sanctification of created beings ; we have there the whole subject of our thanksgiving. This great glory—we must not restrict our conception of it—is also the intrinsic and eternal glory of God the Father which He possesses Himself, through Himself, from eternity. To thank Him for this glory is to thank Him for the eternal joys that we shall one day come to in possession of this same glory, the essential

object of our future blessedness, and for which we are prepared by continual penetration of the sacred mystery or sacrifice of Calvary renewed upon the altar. Lastly, the great glory is also Jesus the Man-God who is, to His Father, all in all.

The second section, *Domine Fili . . .* is concentrated around the words: *Suscipe deprecationem nostram.* It is a petition to the Son. It implores peace for men of good-will, that peace that all the holy Mass asks through Jesus Christ, to whom in advance we entrust our prayer. The words *hominibus bonæ voluntatis* have been interpreted as man the predestined, man who is the subject of *good,* that is of the merciful and gratuitous saving will of God. They are not usually explained in this way, but this view is interesting and worthy of consideration and we believe it to be the right one.

Like all proper liturgical prayers the Angelic Hymn ends by glorifying the Blessed Trinity. The *Gloria in excelsis* is in itself a solemn and imposing doxology,[1] and is in its proper place at the beginning of the liturgical action which in its entirety is devoted to worship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We conclude that Jesus Christ is for us Christians our highest ideal and the object of our holy love. Perfect God and perfect Man, it is He our Saviour and our only Life who leads us to God His Father. Whence the final invocation to God the Son: "*Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone most high, O Jesus Christ!*" etc. Where can we find a more fervent act of faith?

Ah! nowadays more than ever men wish to rob us of Jesus; they wish to snatch from us our faith in His Divinity

[1] Doxology (from δόξα glory, and λόγος word) is a form of praise to God. The complete doxology includes praise of the Blessed Trinity; the simpler form glorifies only Christ.

and in His Redemption. "*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life*" (St. John vi. 69). Against all the temptations of this world, against all the blasphemies of impiety, let us protest and confess that *Jesus Christ alone is holy, He alone Lord, He alone the Most High, with the Holy Ghost in the glory of the Father.*

How many even very pious souls are ignorant of such beautiful and profound prayers as are contained in the *Gloria!*

The Collect.

The *Glory in excelsis* being finished, the priest kisses the altar.

Turning towards the people, he says: "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you." This is ordinarily a salutation of peace, but here it is something more. According to Dom Guéranger, it is an urgent invitation to recollection, for the minister of God seems to say: "Be very attentive, because what follows is of the greatest importance; I am going to speak in the name of Christ." The people answer the priest's salutation with the words: "*May the Lord be with your spirit,*" whilst you are expressing our prayers.

It should be noted here that, on days when the *Gloria in excelsis* is recited, Bishops say "*Pax vobis*—Peace be with you," in place of "*Dominus vobiscum.*" And, indeed, there is some connection between this wish and the Angelic Hymn, for the peace that the Bishop wishes the people is the same that is announced "to men of good will" in the *Gloria in excelsis.* Bishops alone say "*Pax vobis,*" for, before the eleventh century, as we have already stated, they alone recited the *Gloria in excelsis.* When afterwards the ordinary priest was allowed to recite this canticle, he still followed the old practice of saying "*Dominus*

vobiscum." *Ordo Romanus XIV* requires bishops to say *Pax vobis* on *Gaudete* and *Lætare* Sundays.

The people having answered the priest, the latter says "*Oremus*—Let us pray." Formerly the deacon used to add, "*Flectamus genua*—Let us kneel," and the faithful immediately knelt down, and prayed for some time in silence. The subdeacon announced the moment for rising again by saying: "*Levate*—Rise up." Nowadays the subdeacon sings *Levate*. This rite of the *Flectamus* is still observed in certain Masses of the *Proper of the Season*, which, like the Mass for the Dead, have preserved more of the primitive form; they are connected with the solemn penitential rites which require kneeling for prayer.

The ancient practice of the Church was to pray standing up. Sitting down is not a proper attitude for prayer. Tertullian says that Christians pray standing with their hands raised. The celebrant still keeps to this practice when he prays at Mass. The Council of Nicæa forbids kneeling on Sundays and during the fifty days of Eastertime.

Sometimes, after the *Oremus*, as on Good Friday, the priest specified the persons or things to be prayed for.

At Mass there are three principal prayers; the first, called originally *oratio prima*, the Collect; the prayer *super oblata* (Secret) and the prayer *ad Complendam* (The Postcommunion). Each of them forms the conclusion of an important rite; the Collect ends the Litany of the *Kyrie* to which is joined a commentary, the *Gloria*.

The word *Collect* is derived from the Latin *collecta*, assembled, because this prayer was said at the time when the congregation, the *collectio*, had just finished gathering together in the basilica at which the *statio* with its Mass took place; whence the name *Oratio ad Collectam*, prayer

over the assembled congregation ; abbreviated to *Collecta*. That is the real origin of the word. Liturgists remark that the word *collectio* signifies *a collection, résumé,* or *summary,* and that therefore it fitly denotes this solemn prayer, which is the compendium of the desires, collected and formulated by the priest in the name of all those who have just been praying after the *Flectamus*. This consideration sufficiently proves the liturgical importance of the Collect ; it is one of the principal and most solemn parts of the Holy Sacrifice and pre-eminently the prayer of the Church.

For some centuries there was hardly ever more than one Collect at Mass, as is still the case on the principal feasts of the liturgical year. In later times, on minor feasts, and especially on ferial days—that is, on days when the Church does not celebrate the memory of a Saint—the Collects might be two or more. These prayers, joined to the first which is the principal and in reality the true Collect, are either commemorations of Saints, whose feasts coincide with that of the day, or else prayers of devotion which the priest may add when the rubrics allow him to do so, but then only in odd numbers. Moreover, a Bishop often orders the priests of his diocese, and sometimes the Pope those of the whole Church, to add a particular prayer after the Collect of the Mass ; this is called (*oratio*) *imperata*.

The Roman Missal contains a collection of thirty-five prayers from which the Bishop usually selects when ordering a prayer in his diocese. Some of their titles show us the solicitude of Holy Church in our spiritual and temporal needs, and quicken our faith in Providence ; for example there are diverse prayers *for the family, against persecutors of the Church, against evil doers, in time of famine, in time of earthquake, for obtaining rain, for procuring fine weather,*

for saving animals from disease, for the gift of tears, for continence, for patience, etc.

The Collects, especially the most ancient ones, are really little masterpieces, if we consider their structure and the harmonious cadence of their phrases, and the penetrating unction and profound doctrine which they contain. In this last respect especially they illustrate the precious rule of faith so well expressed in the axiom "*Lex orandi, lex credendi*—The rule of prayer is the rule of faith."

The Collect is usually composed of three parts: praise, petition, obsecration and conclusion. The first contains an invocation of God, and either praise offered to God or a short exposition of the mystery of the day. The second expresses an ardent wish in harmony with the same mystery. Finally, the obsecration, or conclusion, consists of an earnest supplication, in which the Church appeals to the merits of Jesus Christ, her Divine Head. This conclusion varies slightly, according as the prayer is addressed to God the Father or to God the Son. No prayer in the Roman Liturgy is addressed to the Holy Ghost. Few Collects are addressed to the Son, the greater part of them and all the ancient ones being directed to the Father. Of the Collects addressed to the Son, the most celebrated is that of *Corpus Christi*: "*Deus qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili,*" etc., which is recited also at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It was written by St. Thomas Aquinas.

At the end of the Collect is answered *Amen.* This Hebrew word was much used by the Jews, even in the earliest ages. *Amen* has two principal meanings in the Liturgy. It denotes, in general, assent or belief—"Yes! It is so, I believe it"; this is its sense in some Liturgies after the words of consecration. It often has also a deprecatory sense, and expresses a wish or fervent desire—"May it be so!"; this is its usual meaning at the end of a

prayer. The author of the commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul (in the works of St. Ambrose) says that by answering *Amen* the congregation affirms that it knows and approves what the priest has prayed for at the altar. At Laon, and in some other churches, it was the custom to sing after the collects : *Christus vincit, Christus regnat,* Christ conquers, Christ reigns.

Such is the Collect. When we hear it, let us imagine that we hear the voice of the Universal Church pleading with God for each one of her children. How powerful is this, our Mother's prayer !

The Epistle.

The Collect has been said ; all the desires of the congregation have been presented to the Lord. The whole Church has spoken in the person of the priest ; but the Church still reserves for her children a solid and necessary nourishment. She still owes them instruction, that strengthening bread without which every Christian life languishes and wastes away. And how does she instruct them ? She borrows her lessons from the inspired authors, and, above all, from the words of Jesus Christ : generally the Apostles, sometimes the Prophets, speak in the Epistle, the Master Himself in the Gospel. Who will dare to despise the inspired word, which is the Word of God ?

A few words now about the Epistle.

Readings at public Service are of the greatest antiquity. They were in use in the Jewish synagogue ; the Gospel speaks of the books of Moses and of the Prophets, which the doctors of the law expounded on the Sabbath day. The first Christians followed this example. Whenever they met together for Holy Mass, they began by reading passages from the Sacred Books. The first was the Epistle. Why

is it so called? It was taken from the Old or the New Testament, but generally from the Epistles of the Apostles, especially St. Paul; hence the generic title of Epistle which that reading now bears. For that reason in several places the Epistle was called *Apostolus*, the Apostle. It was rather exceptional for a lesson to be taken from the prophets instead of from the Apostles; but it occurred on the feast of the Epiphany as early as St. Augustine's time. In place of the Epistle, there were sometimes read Bishops' letters, called *Irenicals*, from a Greek word meaning *peace*, because this exchange of letters between different Churches gave proof of and consolidated their union. On the feasts of Martyrs, in place of the Epistle were read the acts of their martyrdom. The Gallican liturgy made frequent use of these acts at this point in the Mass.

In earlier days there used to be several readings. This custom is still kept in many of our Masses—for instance, on Ember days and on some days in Lent. On these occasions there are usually two lessons, the first being taken from the Prophets, and the second being the Epistle properly so-called. Since the seventh century, at least in Rome, there is only one reading, except on the rare occasions referred to above. The ancient usage has remained in the Ambrosian Liturgy, at Milan, which generally has two readings, and in the Armenian Liturgy, which regularly has three.

Where used the Epistle to be read? It was read from the *ambo*, which term is derived from a Greek word signifying an *elevated place*. The *ambo* was a kind of platform, which was reached by means of several steps. It was constructed of stone or wood, and stood between the choir and the principal nave. It was not very high, and it could contain six or seven persons. The more important churches in

olden days had ambos provided with three pulpits: one for the Gospel,[1] another for the Epistle, and a third for the lesson from the Prophets. From them were read the Old and New Testaments, the acts of the Martyrs, the homilies of the Fathers, and everything that was calculated to instruct or edify the faithful. The ambo was also used for the singing of the Gradual. Before commencing his lesson, the reader besought a benediction, saying: "*Jube, domne, benedicere*—Pray, sir, give me thy blessing." Gradually the name *jubé* was given to the ambo, from which the above formula was so often repeated. Some ancient churches have preserved these *jubés*, some of which extend from one pillar to the other, thus closing up the entrance to the choir.

Who might read the Epistle? At first, even for the Gospel, this was the function of those who had received the order of *lector*. By degrees the honour fell to the subdeacon. It is mentioned in *Ordo Romanus I*, in the eighth century. In the ninth century this was almost universally the rule, though certainly until the end of the eighth century no mention was made of the Epistle in the ordination of the subdeacon.

Formerly it was the rule for everybody, even the priest, to sit and listen to the reading of the Epistle, and this is still observed at a Pontifical Mass, the Bishop reciting it in a low voice after the subdeacon has finished. The priest says it at High Mass, whilst the minister is singing it.

[1] In many of our ancient English churches the Gospel was sung from the *rood-loft*. This was a massive beam or platform, which was erected across the chancel arch; there was here a large *rood*-crucifix, facing the nave of the church, on each side of which, as a rule, stood also figures of our Blessed Lady and St. John the Evangelist. This loft was generally reached by a spiral staircase leading from one of the transepts. Traces of these rood-lofts and the steps leading to them can be seen to-day in many of our pre-Reformation churches.—NOTE TO ENGLISH EDITION.

After reading the Epistle, the subdeacon returns to the celebrant, kisses his hand, and receives his blessing. By this rite he "means to ask pardon for any faults he may have committed during the reading. This interpretation is suggested to us by the similar rite in the Lyonese Liturgy" (Desloge). But is not this blessing rather a reward for the service which the subdeacon has rendered to the congregation by his reading? As regards the kissing of the celebrant's hand, it is a sign of reverence that is paid to him, just as formerly the deacon kissed the Pontiff's feet before reading the Gospel.

At the end of the Epistle is answered: "*Deo gratias*—Thanks be to God." This formula was commonly used in the early Church. We often meet with it in St. Paul's Epistles, and nothing accords better with the piety of the first Christians and Martyrs. "What can we conceive in the mind," says St. Augustine, "pronounce with the lips, or write with the pen, better than *Deo gratias*? No expression can be more correct to say, more joyful to hear, more sublime to understand, or more fruitful to employ." Monks used to greet each other with the formula, *Deo gratias*. It frequently occurs in the Liturgy. What does it mean? It is a cry of gratitude to the Lord, the Author of all good. Thanksgiving in all things and at all times is one of the principal objects of the Liturgy.

The Gradual, Alleluia, and Tract.

Between the Epistle and the Gospel occur portions of the Liturgy called the *Gradual*, the *Alleluia Verse*, and the *Tract*. They are generally taken from the Psalms, and the use of them is as ancient as the reading of the lessons. Two of them are as a rule joined together. For instance, the *Gradual* is sung with the *Alleluia*, or sometimes with the *Tract*, as is the case in Lent and penitential seasons,

and in the Mass for the Dead. In Paschal-time after Saturday *in albis* there is an *Alleluia* verse.

Why are two chanted in succession? As we have already intimated, there were usually two lessons after the Collect, which were each followed by a canticle. When one lesson was judged sufficient, these two chants were brought together.

Let us remark in passing that these portions of the Liturgy are not intended, like the *Introit*, *Offertory*, and *Communion*, to occupy the minds of the faithful while other ceremonies are being carried out. They should be listened to for what they contain. "Hence we see what heresy is committed in substituting organ recitals for these chants" (Mgr. Duchesne, *Origins of Christian Worship*, p. 169).

The *Gradual* was a lesson, but was sung and is so-called from the Latin word *gradus*, meaning a step, because it was sung from the *ambo*, which had steps leading up to it. At first the Gradual was a whole psalm. A cantor—in this instance the deacon—used to sing it. "To be deacon it was necessary to have a fine voice and to be thoroughly acquainted with the art of music" (Mgr. Duchesne). St. Gregory the Great deprived the deacon of this privilege. The Gradual is called *Psalmus responsorius*, psalm with a response, because it was originally a *responsory*, that is, made up of two phrases: the first was called *Responsorium*, the second *Versus*. The cantor sang the *responsorium* alone; the choir repeated it and then the cantor sang the verse.

The *Alleluia*, a chant full of joy and mystery, comes to us from the Jews. It is an exclamation of joy before or after a verse, a relic of one of the *Alleluiatic* psalms that were formerly sung all through, and so called because they belong to a series of psalms which bear the title

Alleluia. The word means, "Praise the Lord." Like the *Deo gratias*, it was familiar to the first Christians as an ejaculation of the heart. St. John in his Apocalypse tells us that it is the hymn of Heaven, the cry of joy of all the Saints (Apoc. xix. 1-7). The Jews used to sing their Alleluiatic psalms at the Pasch. It is used especially during Paschal-time, for then the prevailing spirit is joy, and everything speaks of the triumph of the risen Christ.

The *Alleluia* is found in all the Liturgies, which is an evident sign of the antiquity of its use. According to Sozomen, at the beginning of the fifth century in Rome it was sung only at Easter. In the sixth century it was sung throughout Paschal-time. St. Gregory prescribed its use on Sundays and feasts of the year. This Alleluia is preceded by the Gradual; that is its normal position. On account of the joy that Alleluia expresses it is suppressed in Lent, at funerals and on penitential days; it is used more frequently in Paschal-time when the Gradual is dropped to make room for it. There are then two Alleluia verses; they are often taken, not from the Psalter nor even from Scripture, but are perhaps a *farcing* of the Alleluia. The beauty of the Alleluia chant is in the *ubilus*, *jubilatio* or *cantilena*—the neums or groups of notes which prolong it, an outburst of joy that cannot be expressed in words. Easter week, faithful to the ancient combination of Gradual and Alleluia, begins the Great Alleluia only on the Saturday (*Sabbato in albis*). The Alleluia is not dropped during Advent, for it became a time of penance only in the eighth century.

The *Tract* is, perhaps, the second psalm that used to be sung after the second of the two lessons at the Epistle. As we have said, it replaces the *Alleluia* on the Sundays in Lent. The *Tract*, called *cantus tractus*, was a psalm

sung at the ambo by a single cantor without the interruption of a response or antiphon (*uno tractu*), whence its name. Its melody, solemn and very characteristic, is rich and of an altogether ancient style. And on account of this venerable and solemn style (dating from the fourth or fifth century in Italy) it has been kept for the ancient penitential liturgy.

The *Gradual* and the *Tract* were whole psalms that have been reduced subsequently to a few verses. The complete psalm has been kept on the first Sunday in Lent, on Palm Sunday and on Good Friday. On the Mondays, Wednesdays (except Wednesday in Holy Week) and Fridays in Lent, which alone have a Tract, it is always the same: *Domine non secundum peccata* (Pss. cii and lxxvii), a fervent prayer for forgiveness.

A few words concerning the *Sequence*. We have remarked that the choir sings and sustains a whole series of notes on the *jubilus*. As a help to the memory with these long neums without words the idea was suggested of accompanying them with a text, in prose or verse, and that on all the feasts of the year. These texts were called *sequentiæ*, *sequences*, because they followed the *Gradual* or *Alleluia*. These chants became very popular and were sung in church. This idea (it originated about the year 850) is attributed to the monk, Notker Balbulus (the stammerer), a Benedictine of St. Gall in Switzerland (†912). The Roman missal used to contain a great number of these hymns, which were also called *Proses* because they originally had neither metre nor rhythm. One of the best-known composers of *Sequences* was Adam of St. Victor (†1192). Gradually they gave rise to the famous dramatic compositions that took place in churches during the Middle Ages, after the third responsory at Matins, before the *Te Deum*. The *Victimæ paschali* with its dialogues formed

a part of these liturgical dramas. In the sixteenth century St. Pius V, in his reformed Roman Missal, retained only four Sequences—namely, the *Victimæ Paschali* for Easter, the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* for Whitsuntide, the *Lauda Sion* for Corpus Christi, and the *Dies Iræ* for Requiem Masses. The *Stabat Mater* was added later for the Feast of Our Lady of Dolours.[1] Religious sometimes have the privilege of singing special Sequences for the principal feasts of their Order.

The mystery of the feast is more clearly expressed by the Sequence than by other chanted pieces; and we cannot fail to admire the depth of its expression and its unspeakable charm of melody. This enthusiastic ode, this sweet prayer, ought ever to elevate and bring us nearer to God.

A great act is now to be accomplished, one of the most important of the Holy Sacrifice—namely, the reading of the Gospel. So far it has been man, Prophet or Apostle, who has spoken; now it is God Himself who will teach us.

The Gospel.

This lesson was taken from the *Complete Gospel*, as it was called—that is, from a book containing the full text of the Four Gospels. The length of the text to be read was left to the judgment of the president of the assembly. This is still the custom with the Greeks. A special Gospel book was afterwards composed, containing a selection of extracts from the Gospels adapted to the different liturgical

[1] The *Victimæ Paschali* is attributed to Wipo, chaplain to the emperor, Conrad II (eleventh century), *Veni Sancte Spiritus* to various authors: to Hermann Contractus, monk of Reichenau, to King Robert the Pious, to Innocent III, to Cardinal Stephen Langton, Archbp. of Canterbury (eleventh century). St. Thomas Aquinas wrote the *Lauda Sion*. The *Dies Iræ* was written by Thomas de Celano (†about 1250), the companion of St. Francis of Assisi. The *Stabat Mater* is by Jacopone da Todi, a Franciscan (†1306).

feasts, and definitely appointed to be read at the Holy Sacrifice.

The book of the Gospels was always esteemed in the Liturgy as an object of special veneration. It was rightly looked upon as representing Jesus Christ, for the Gospel is the precious casket of that everlasting word, one and the same with the Word of the Father, which came forth, living and efficacious, from the lips of the God-Man. St. John Chrysostom says that nobody touched it except with fear and trembling, being inspired by a great feeling of piety and reverence.

Sometimes this volume was most beautifully decorated. On great feasts it was customary to leave it on the altar the whole day. Monks and clergy used to carry it in triumph in their processions, incensing it the whole time. It was this book that the Legate or the Bishop kissed on entering a cathedral or monastery. St. Cyril of Alexandria tells us that at the Third General Council it was placed on a special throne, to show that Christ was the appointed Master and Head of those sessions. This same custom was also observed at the Councils of Trent and of the Vatican. The Church orders oaths to be taken on this book. The Christians of the first ages followed the holy practice of carrying a copy of it upon their person, either on their breast or around their neck. The Greeks bury the Gospels along with their priests. It is the only liturgical book which is kissed, incensed, and signed with the sign of the Cross.

Who may read the Gospel at Mass? In the actual Liturgy of the Church this honour falls at High Mass to the deacon. The practice is mentioned by St. Jerome and from the fifth century onwards this office became the deacon's privilege in all rites. St. Gregory, at the Council held in 595, sanctioned it definitively. At his ordination

the deacon receives from the hands of the Bishop this sacred book, and with it "*the power to sing the Gospel in the Church of God.*" This important office, and that of approaching so near to the Body and Blood of Our Lord, account for the fact that the early Fathers so highly exalt the Order of the Diaconate, and even go so far as to call it a third priesthood.

It seems, however, that originally lectors were allowed to read the Gospel, just as they did the Epistle. In some places the Gospel was read by the priest himself, and on very great feasts by the Bishop or the Patriarch. We know that, in the Order of St. Benedict, it is the Abbot's privilege to sing the Gospel at Matins; this he does in his stall, vested with a stole, and assisted by two acolytes. History relates that, at the end of the Middle Ages, the German Emperors had acquired the privilege of chanting the Gospel at Matins on the feast of Christmas. Charles IV sang it at Basle, Mayence, and Cambrai. The Emperor Sigismund availed himself of this right at the Council of Constance in 1414, and that even in the presence of Pope John XXIII.

What great faith there was in those past ages! What great respect for the things of God! What a lesson for us all in this our day!

We shall briefly give in their order the ceremonies which accompany the singing of the Gospel.

At a High Mass the celebrant recites the Gospel privately and in a low voice, just as he does the Epistle. This custom, however, dates only from the Middle Ages, for anciently the celebrating priest did not recite what was said by the deacon, subdeacon, lectors, or cantors; in fact, the Epistles and Gospels were not found in the books used at the altar itself. Low Mass, introduced later on, as we have said, necessitated the composition of a book

containing the whole text of the Liturgy, together with the rubrics that fixed the ceremonies. This was the *Missale plenarium*, *Missale plenum*, the complete Missal, which appeared in the ninth century ; in its composition the Gregorian Sacramentary which Pope Adrian sent to Charlemagne between 784 and 791 was used as a basis. But before the period of the Sacramentaries we know that there were *libelli*, small books which contained the complete text of one Mass. There are still in existence ancient Sacramentaries that are, really, complete missals, for example the Monte Cassino palimpsest, the Bobbio missal, called the *Sacramentarium Gallicanum* of the sixth or seventh century. These missals were afterwards used also at High Mass, and devotion soon led the celebrant to repeat in a low tone all that his ministers recited. This practice gradually became general, and was eventually made the rule.

The Epistle being ended, while the choir is singing one of the prescribed chants the subdeacon returns to the altar with the book of the Epistles, and approaches the priest. The latter places his hand upon the book for him to kiss, after which he blesses him. The subdeacon then transfers the Missal to the right side of the altar. In olden times the Missal was not removed until just before the Offertory, and then only to make room for the gifts that were to be offered, which the subdeacon brought from the credence table.

Let us notice that there occurs here a kind of repetition in the Liturgy, the priest accomplishing in a simple and private manner what the deacon will soon fulfil in a solemn and public way. This repetition extends not only to the reading of the sacred text, but also to two prayers that immediately precede it.

The celebrant, in passing over to the Gospel side, stops in the middle of the altar, and, profoundly inclined before the crucifix, recites in a low tone the *Munda cor meum* and the *Dominus sit in corde meo*, which will presently be again recited, the first by the deacon and the second by the priest. Then he reads the sacred passage in a low voice; but at the end he does not kiss the Missal, as at Low Mass, because in a few moments he will kiss the Gospel, which the sub-deacon will bring to him after the deacon has solemnly chanted it. All that is here done by the priest is, so to say, a matter of private devotion. The official function will be fulfilled by the deacon.

In fact, the deacon, leaving the celebrant, has already taken the book of the Gospels from the credence table, and has returned to lay it upon the altar. At one time this book remained there during the whole of the Mass. This ceremony obviously shows the union between the word of the Word contained in the Gospel book and the Word Incarnate Himself represented by the altar. In the Dominican use the Epistle book is placed, before High Mass, at the Epistle corner. The deacon and the sub-deacon carry in with them at the entry of the ministers two other books; the former brings the priest's missal which he places on the cushion or stand when he goes up to the altar for the *Introit*, the latter brings the Gospel book which he places on the Gospel corner of the altar.

The private Gospel being finished, the celebrant puts incense into the thurible, and whilst making the sign of the Cross over it says:

Ab illo benedicaris in cujus honore cremaberis. — Mayest thou be blessed by Him in whose honour thou art to be burnt.

At Toul the following formula was used: "*May the Lord kindle and fill our hearts with the odour of His heavenly*

inspiration, that we may rightly understand and practise the precepts of His Gospel."

The deacon then kneels on the steps of the altar, and recites the following prayer :

Munda cor meum, ac labia mea, omnipotens Deus, qui labia Isaiæ prophetæ calculo mundasti ignito : ita me tua grata miseratione dignare mundare, ut sanctum Evangelium tuum digne valeam nuntiare. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Cleanse my heart and my lips, O Almighty God, who didst cleanse the lips of the Prophet Isaias with a burning coal ; and deign, through Thy gracious mercy, to purify me, that I may worthily announce Thy holy Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer, already in use by the eleventh century, is full of mystery. It alludes to the sacred ministry of the great Prophet Isaias, whose lips were consecrated by the contact of a live coal taken by one of the Seraphim from the altar of Heaven. This coal was to purify and render him worthy to convey the oracles of the Lord to the people. The deacon is the herald of the word of the New Testament. He, too, trembles at the thought of the august ministry which falls to his lot, and he likewise begs for the purification of his heart and lips.

Rising, he takes from the altar the Book of Life. *Ordo Romanus VI* (eleventh century) enjoins him to say meanwhile : *Domine labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam*—O Lord open Thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. At this point, in the ancient Spanish Liturgy, the people used to acclaim the sacred book, saying : "*Praise be to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ !*" Like the Prophet, the deacon desires first to be commissioned, so he says :

Jube, domne, benedicere. Pray, Father, give me thy blessing.

And the priest replies, with his hands joined :

Dominus sit in corde tuo et in labiis tuis ; ut digne et competenter annunties Evangelium suum. In nomine Patris et Filii ✠ et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

May the Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest worthily and in a becoming manner announce His Holy Gospel. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

According to *Ordo Romanus I*, *II*, and *III*, when the deacon asked this blessing of a bishop he kissed his foot.

This, with a slight modification, is the same prayer which the celebrant has previously made for himself, and which is always made at Low Masses. He then blesses the deacon, and lays his hand upon the book for him to kiss : it is Christ who gives a mission to His minister, and opens for him in a sense the mysterious Book of His Word. The solemn and authorized messenger of the Word Incarnate descends from the altar, having kissed the hand of the priest who sends him forth.

The deacon's procession sets off to the Ambo : first come the acolytes with their lighted candles, then the thurifer with fire in the thurible, after him the subdeacon, and last of all the deacon, reverently carrying the Book of the Gospels. The candles are a sign of joy, says St. Jerome, representing the *Light of the World*, contained in the Holy Gospel : by this *Light* the nations are enabled to open their eyes to the truth of God, and to be purified and enlightened. When the procession of the deacon commences, the Greek Liturgy bids the celebrant turn towards the people, and say : "*Here is wisdom ; let us stand up and listen to the Holy Gospel.*" St. Germanus of Paris in the sixth century compared this procession to the victorious progress of the power of Christ triumphant over death.

All the people rise. Monks, priests, and even bishops, uncover their heads. In olden times during the singing of

the Gospel it was customary to lay aside the crutch-like sticks upon which the people leant to avoid fatigue during the long services. Oriental bishops took off their *pallium*, while the Emperors and the Kings of France, together with their wives, laid aside their crowns and diadems. Polish princes were accustomed to draw and brandish their swords to testify their devotion to the cause of the Gospel.

St. Benedict says, in the eleventh chapter of his *Rule*, that whilst the Abbot reads the Gospel (at Matins) all are to stand with fear and trembling.

Why does the deacon turn towards the north to sing the Gospel? For this reason: the *Ordo Romanus I* does not forbid the deacon to turn to the south, towards that part of the church where the men are usually grouped together. In fact in many churches the men occupied this part. The deacon turned towards them particularly so that they might hear well the words of the holy Gospel and when they returned home might explain it carefully to their wives and children. The practice of singing the Gospel towards the north arose, in the Roman rite, at least, at the end of the eleventh century. According to the author of the *Micrologus* it was derived from the rite of Low Mass, at which the priest at the altar faces towards the north for the reading of the Gospel. He turns himself a little towards the people according to ancient custom. Deacons imitated this practice, and henceforward sang the Gospel facing north. Mystical interpretations have been given to this ceremony; the north, in scripture, signifies the habitation of devils and the darkness of the world, so the Gospel, it was said, was sung towards the north to enlighten this part of the world and snatch it away from Satan.

The deacon solemnly intones the "*Dominus vobiscum*— the Lord be with you"—but before *Ordo Romanus II*

(eleventh century), he used not to use this salutation—the people replying: "*Et cum spiritu tuo*—And with your spirit." This wish is a prayer in preparation for the act about to be performed. Let us observe that, except at the singing of the *Exultet* on Holy Saturday, this is the only occasion on which, in the presence of a priest or Bishop, the deacon may thus greet the congregation. Here the holy office he fulfils authorizes him to do so. He next announces the passage of the Gospel to be sung: "*Initium* (or *sequentia*) *sancti evangelii secundum N . . .*—The beginning (or continuation) of the Gospel according to N . . ." Whilst he pronounces these words he traces with his thumb a cross upon the holy book,[1] and then in like manner upon himself on the forehead and breast. That was the practice until the eleventh century when the signing of the lips was added; an example which the people imitate to show they are not ashamed of the truths of the Gospel, but are ready to confess them with their lips, in addition to bearing them deeply engraved upon their hearts.

The sign of the Cross made on the book is not a blessing of the text, but merely an explanatory or commemorative sign, which appears to mean, "*This is the Book of the Crucified One.*"

The Gospel having been announced by the deacon, the people answer with enthusiasm: "*Gloria tibi, Domine*—Glory be to Thee, O Lord." That is a Gallican custom, it appears, to be found as early as the sixth century. Formerly in some churches the full doxology was said, of which the above words are but the commencement:

[1] It should be noted that this sign of the Cross ought to be made, not on the cross found in some Missals just before the Gospel, nor on the words *initium* or *sequentia*, but at the actual *beginning* of the text (*Collationes Brugenses*, vol. ii, p. 546).

Gloria tibi, Domine
Qui natus est de virgine,
Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.

O Lord, of Virgin-Mother born,
Be praise and glory unto Thee;
And to the Father infinite
And Holy Ghost, eternally.

The deacon incenses the sacred book in order, so to say, to embalm Jesus Christ with its perfume. This rite is found in the thirteenth century. Formerly in many churches, in Paris for example, a bell was rung during the Gospel. This bell was a summons to the Mass of the Faithful which was now at hand. In the same way nowadays a bell is rung at the *Te Deum* of Matins to announce the beginning of Lauds. Elsewhere it was the custom to ring at the *Agnus Dei* for Sext which came after Mass. The piety of the faithful has interpreted these different ringings as signs of joy, triumph, and thanksgiving.

At the end of the Gospel is said, "*Laus tibi, Christe*—Praise be to Thee, O Christ." In some places *Deo gratias* was said, as after the Epistle; in other places "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*—Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" and elsewhere also *Amen*, as signifying an act of faith, "It is true; I believe it." St. Benedict bids his monks say *Amen* after the Gospel at Matins.

Then immediately the subdeacon, who has been holding the Book of the Gospels whilst the deacon has been singing the sacred text, bears the book to be kissed by the celebrant. At Low Mass the priest kisses the Missal as soon as he has finished reading the Gospel. This act is a mark of supreme homage to the Person of Christ, an act of adoration. Formerly both clergy and people kissed the book. Honorius III forbade the people to do this (1216–1227). The clergy kissed it while open, the laity when closed. This was done whilst the *Credo* was being sung, the subdeacon, accompanied by the thurifer, carrying the Gospel to each

one in turn. We can at least remember these beautiful and profoundly significant practices.

The celebrant, on kissing the Book of the Gospels, says :

Per evangelica dicta deleantur nostra delicta. — May our sins be blotted out by the words of the Gospel.

The hearing of the Holy Gospel can produce this grace, for it has the virtue of awakening in the soul dispositions such as obtain pardon for sin. This prayer is not in Missals anterior to 1570 ; some rather like it were said in the twelfth century.

The Book of the Gospels is carried back to the credence table.

At this point the sermon was generally preached to the people. The Greeks used to call it the *Homily*. It was a simple development of the Gospel which had been read ; formerly the people listened standing up, for it was not very long. This form of preaching was, and is, very acceptable to the faithful ; we cannot too much encourage this custom. Very many Christians know nothing of the Gospel, and still more do not understand it. It is not astonishing, then, that it is not practised. Think what a complete summary of Christian doctrine could be imbibed by the students in a school or college, for example, if every morning after the Gospel the priest, turning to his flock, gave a simple commentary on the leading thought of the Gospel of the day ; there is no reason why he should not sometimes speak of the Epistle. He need only devote five minutes to this sermon, but it would be far more worthwhile than many of the tedious, irrelevant meditations that are often given at this point. Remember, in this connection Pius X's last directives about preaching the Gospel. And, then, this teaching always accompanying the mysteries and feasts of the

liturgical year would be an initiation, of the understanding and the heart of the congregation, into the untold wonders of Christian doctrine.

We still possess the invariable prayer that was said after the sermon at the time of St. Augustine.

It was after the *Homily*, as St. Augustine intimates in one of his sermons (*Sermo XXXIV*, Antwerp, 1567, p. 48), that the Bishop or priest read the notices to the faithful. At Rome at one time *indulgences* were granted to the people after the sermon and *public absolution* was given to them (*Ordo Romanus XIV*, p. 53). There is still a relic of this custom at Pontifical High Mass. This practice appears to have been substituted for the ancient rite of dismissing the catechumens and penitents, and for the prayers which were said over them with the imposition of hands, all of which took place just after the sermon.

In olden times, in fact, after the Bishop's sermon, the deacon dismissed the catechumens, crying in a loud voice :

" *Ite in pace catechumeni*—Let the catechumens depart in peace." This rite seems to have disappeared between the fifth and sixth centuries. The old *Ordines* or Sacramentaries do not mention it. At this point occurs the end, liturgically, of the Mass of the Catechumens.

The singing of the Gospel is the culminating point of this part of the Mass ; all that has preceded has been leading up to it. " It was necessary," says one author, " that the sacred accents of psalmody should pre-dispose our hearts to receive the divine doctrines with compunction, docility, and fervour." To receive them in this manner is to fit our souls for happiness.

" *And it came to pass,*" says the Gospel, " *as He [Jesus] spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to Him ; Blessed is the womb that*

bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck. But He said: Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke xi. 27 *et seq.*).

"Let us listen to the Gospel," says St. Augustine, "as if the Lord Himself were speaking. Do not say: Happy were those who could see Him, for many of them who saw Him did Him to death. The precious words that fell from His mouth were written down for us, have been preserved for us, are recited for us, and will continue to be for those who come after us. . . . Let us listen to the Lord" (*In Joann.*, tract. xxx, 1).

O Jesus, we believe all that Thou hast said and revealed, and to testify our faith in Thy Holy Gospel we shall sing the *Creed*.

The Credo.

For the historical reason given below, and because the *Credo* is, as it were, an extension of the Gospel, it can be joined on to the Mass of the Catechumens.

After the Gospel the celebrant intones the *Credo*, the rest of which he recites in a low voice, while the choir continues the singing of it.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cæli et terræ, visibilium omnium et invisibilium:

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum; et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula; Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero; genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de cælis [hic genuflectitur]*; et in-*

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; consubstantial with the Father; by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven [*here all kneel*]; and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost

carnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria Virgine, ET HOMO FACTUS EST. *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas; et ascendit in cælum, sedet ad dexteram Patris: et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos, et mortuos; cujus regni non erit finis.*

of the Virgin Mary; AND WAS MADE MAN. He was crucified also for us, under Pontius Pilate, He suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

Et in Spiritum sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur, et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The *Credo* is called the *Symbol* of Faith, from a Greek word meaning *sign* or *figure*. It is an expression of faith and a summary of its principal truths.

There are four Creeds in the Liturgy: the Apostles' Creed, that of Nicæa (325), that of Constantinople (381), and that said to be by St. Athanasius, used in the liturgy since the ninth century.

The Apostles' Creed is the most ancient, dating from the origin of the Church; it is also called the *Roman Creed.* It is the one given in the Breviary, which priests recite daily. We also learn the same in the Catechism.

The Athanasian Creed was formerly recited every day at the Office of *Prime*, but nowadays it is only said on some Sundays at this same Hour.

The Symbol, or *Credo*, that is sung at Mass is a fusion of those of Nicæa and Constantinople. It is more complete

and explicit than that of the Apostles, for it was composed expressly to refute heresies which had arisen in the Church.

During the first five centuries the *Credo* was not sung at Mass. The Creeds were professions of faith made in view of baptism about to be received. They have no special connection with the Eucharist and do not mention it. Strictly speaking, the Creed does not belong to the Mass of the Catechumens but rather to the Mass of the Faithful; but by the time the chanting of the Creed had been introduced, the catechumens were no longer kept under the rigid discipline of earlier days. In the year 511 at Constantinople, it was sung for the first time and at all Masses. Previously it used to be sung only once a year—on Good Friday. This practice passed from the East into Spain and France, then later, in the eleventh century, it reached Rome. In 471, the bishop Peter the Fuller ordered the singing of the *Credo* at Antioch. If the Roman Church adopted it so late, it was because she was free from heresy; so says Benedict VIII (1012–1024).

On what days is the *Credo* sung?

The *Credo* is sung for two reasons: the solemnity of the occasion or a special connection between the Symbol of Faith and the feast of the day.

The *Credo* is sung, for the first of these reasons, on all Sundays of the year, as well as on all solemn feasts, on the feast of the Dedication of a Church, and on patronal feasts; also in churches which possess a notable relic of the Saint whose feast is being celebrated. It is fitting that, at an hour when the people are gathered together and united in body, they should be more closely united still in soul by their common belief; this is why they repeat the *Credo*.

The *Credo* is sung, for the second reason, on feasts of

Our Lady, for she is spoken of in the Creed ; on feasts of the *Angels*, who are brought to our minds by the word *invisibilium ;* on feasts of the *Apostles*, who first taught us the Faith ; of *Doctors*, who expounded and defended it ; and, finally, on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, since she was the first to believe in the Resurrection of Christ. It is omitted in Masses for the Dead and on Ferial days because these Masses are very old and the *Credo* was not said, probably, at the time they were composed.

The rubrics which regulate the recitation of the *Credo* differ but little from those of the *Gloria in excelsis*, so we need not speak of them. In the primitive Carthusian statutes the monks are ordered to make a prostration and kiss the ground at *Et homo factus est*.

After *Incarnatus est* has been sung, the deacon takes from the credence the *burse* containing the corporal, upon which the oblation is to repose, and carries it to the altar. He carries it closed, *not open* (cf. Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. xiii, p. 146), but with the opening turned towards him, so that when he arrives at the altar he may easily take out the corporal, and unfold and spread it.

The sign of the Cross made by the celebrant at the end of the *Credo* was in use as early as the fourth century. In those days the *Credo* ended with the words *carnis resurrectionem*, literally "the resurrection of the *flesh*," *this* flesh, which was indicated by touching the forehead as the words were said. That is probably the orirg of the sign of the Cross at this point.

The Sacred Congregation of Rites, it should be noted, by a decree dated December 11, 1911, has forbidden the practice of the celebrant continuing the Mass while the *Credo* is being sung.

The Mass of the Catechumens is over ; it has no connection with the action of the sacrifice save as a preparation

for it, and by being joined to it in practice ; just as the office of Terce, which usually comes before Mass, does not belong to it at all.

The predominating theme of the Mass of the Catechumens is faith. As a result souls are made ready for that love which the Eucharistic sacrifice will bring to perfection. To them we may apply those words of Jesus at the Last Supper : " Now you are clean by reason of the word which I have spoken to you "—*Jam vos mundi estis propter sermonem quem locutus sum vobis.* Our understanding now possesses the Word of Christ ; our wills must be fed and strengthened by His flesh which is now to be sacrificed and offered anew for us.

PART TWO

THE MASS OF THE FAITHFUL:

SACRIFICE

The first part of the Mass has contained praise, petition, and instruction. Man has been humbled, his heart filled with joy, his piety nourished with faith, and his mind enlightened. Both the ministers and the congregation are prepared.

The Mass of the Faithful was called in ancient times *Missa Sacramentorum*, Mass of the Sacraments, or the Mysteries, because it is in this part of the Sacrifice that the mysteries are performed.

Three things concur to the perfection of the Sacrifice properly so-called: the *preparation for the Oblation of the the Victim*, the *Oblation of the Victim*, and finally the *Communion, or union with the Sacrifice*.

The *preparation for the Oblation* extends from the Offertory to the Preface; the *Oblation of the Victim* from the Preface to the *Pater*, exclusively; *union with the Sacrifice* comprises the rest of the prayers of the Mass.

This threefold division is indicated by those sacred words which immediately precede the consecration of the bread and wine.

Jesus Christ,

> *qui pridie quam pateretur*, "the day before He suffered": a reminder of the sacrifice of the Mass itself, the Last Supper at which He instituted it.

accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas— "took bread into His holy and venerable hands": that is, the blessing of the matter of the sacrifice, the *Offertory*.

et elevatis oculis in cœlum ad te, Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, benedixit—"and having lifted up His eyes to heaven to Thee, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, blessed it": that is, the *oblation of the victim* that is sacrificed, the consecration.

fregit, deditque discipulis suis dicens: accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes — "He broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take ye and eat ye all of this": union with the sacrifice, the *communion*.

These Notes on the Liturgy are nothing else than a commentary on this text of scripture which the Church has placed at the consecration of the Mass. Understanding of it, practice of it, carrying it out in our lives will make us saints. The Secret in the Mass of St. Ignatius Loyola contains this teaching: it makes us pray that "the kindly suffrages of blessed Ignatius may, together with our offerings, come before Thee, O Lord; and may these most sacred mysteries, *which Thou hast ordained to be the fount of all holiness*, in very truth sanctify us likewise." That is not difficult to understand.

For what, in fact, is the end of man? It is happiness. What is this happiness? God, God alone: God seen, comprehended, loved in the beatific vision which is to come. Original sin deprived man of this hope. The Word became incarnate and died on the Cross, in the *offering of His sacrifice*, in order to regain for man this happiness, this end, God. The Mass, by renewing this great work of redemption, by applying it to man, is con-

tinually fitting him the better to attain this end. Thus we see holiness, in new-found righteousness, is renewed every morning in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We should make of this sacrifice, then, the incentive, the life, the soul of our sanctification, " the unceasing working out of our redemption " (Secret, Saturday in Easter week).

Before we begin our study of the Sacrifice it is of capital importance to remember a truth which is but too often forgotten. It throws considerable light on the whole Eucharistic liturgy. It is that the holy Sacrifice is offered to God not by the priest alone *but also by all those present.* It is forgotten that though the priest is the consecrated minister officially deputed by the Church for the Offering of this Sacrifice, nevertheless the faithful *in union with the priest* are spiritually, though in a different manner, but in a very real sense, sharers in a kind of priesthood, so that with him and through him they offer the sacrifice to God. This is the consequence of their baptism.

Moreover some theologians teach that the priest's communion is essential to the sacrifice ; all indeed are agreed that it is an integral part of it, that is, it completes and perfects the sacrifice. It follows from this that all the faithful present at this sacrifice, by the very fact that they offer it by and with the priest, are presumed to take part in it by Eucharistic communion. What is more logical ?

In fact, and it is true of every sacrifice offered to the Divinity, the victim should be consumed at it. Those who offer it must offer themselves with it for it is there on the altar to represent them, they must therefore unite themselves with it so that there may be perfect compenetration and communion between this victim and the offerers of sacrifice. Thus the whole liturgy of the Mass proclaims to us that as we are, with the priest, sacrificers

of our own offering, so are we hosts with the Host ; many prayers of the Mass imply this very clearly. Bossuet said : " The Church who offers up bread and wine to be made Body and Blood, and who, when they have been consecrated, offers up also this Body and Blood, does so only to accomplish a third oblation in which she offers up herself." And how very aptly is this mystery, which unites us to Jesus, and through Him to each one of our brothers in Holy Communion, represented in the very elements of our Sacrifice. " The holy Fathers," says Bossuet, " have seen in the bread and in the wine a compound of many grains of wheat reduced to a unity, and of the juice of many grapes blended together ; and they have regarded this compound as a figure of all the faithful reduced to one single body, to be offered to God in unity of spirit : which led St. Augustine to say that the entire city of the redeemed was the eternal sacrifice of the Holy Trinity." This mystery is effected more especially when, by receiving into ourselves the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, we become, as it were, one with this divine Victim ; when, as an offering, we are borne with Him before the throne of the majesty of God the Father.

This twofold function of the faithful at Mass which makes of them both offerers and offering is so great a reality that without it the liturgy of sacrifice is unintelligible and seems almost meaningless.

Perusal of the prayers and ceremonies of the Ordinary of the Mass shows conclusively that the priest does not offer Mass alone, and, in addition, that if the congregation offering themselves with Jesus do not take part by receiving Holy Communion the general meaning of these prayers and ceremonies will not be understood, and, as regards those from the *Pater* onwards, will have no meaning. It is a pity that formerly these truths were

not taught in schools and at catechism lessons. In spite of that people are surprised that the faithful are sometimes bored at Mass, or that they do not come to it.

Moreover in the primitive Church the early Christians understood holy Mass in the way that we have just explained it. Indeed the Mass was at first called Communion. Why ? Because in the minds of all of them it contained for each one of them primarily a close union of offering and oblation with Jesus and then with every other member of the congregation.

These things required saying again in order to show what the Mass is and how people may take part in it fruitfully.

§ 1. Preparation for the Oblation of the Victim

From the Offertory to the Preface.

Qui pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem . . . et hunc præclarum calicem in sanctas et venerabiles manus suas. . . .

" Who the day before He suffered took bread into His holy and venerable hands . . . and this goodly chalice. . . ."

This part of the Mass extends from the *Offertory* to the *Preface ;* it comprises the prayers and ceremonies by which the Church, that is the faithful, before offering the ineffable sacrifice of the altar, entrust to the priest of God the petitions and intentions for which they are offering it.

It is in this way that we, offering the bread and the wine with the Church through her priest, an oblation which represents us, by the total gift of ourselves make ourselves ready to be taken into the offering which will be made by Jesus of Himself at the transubstantiation. What unity there is in the Mass ! The Offertory prepares priest and

faithful for the one sacrifice in which Jesus will bear them with Himself before the eternal Father through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Offertory must not be looked upon as the "Little Canon" or as an anticipation of the real sacrifice of the Mass at the Consecration—that is a theory which cuts right across the whole upward movement which is so characteristic of the Mass. For there is an upward movement in the Mass which, starting from the material offering of the bread and the wine, finds its culminating point at the very moment when the change takes place—the oblation of the Body and Blood to God. The Offertory records and presents the intentions of those who offer. They are manifold—as the Secret prayers so frequently show—but they are offered all together, with those of Jesus Christ included, in the one offering which He presents to His Father at the Consecration. There is no better proof, no more solemn reminder, of the union of the faithful with Christ in the supreme liturgical act; there is no more vivid portrayal of the doctrine of the incorporation of the members with the Head of the Mystical Body of the Church.

The Oremus.

At the conclusion of the *Credo* the priest kisses the altar, and, turning to the people, says aloud: "*Dominus vobiscum*"; to which is answered: "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*" Then the celebrant, inviting the people to prayer, adds: "*Oremus*—Let us pray"—in other words, the solemn moment is approaching, let us redouble our piety and fervour, let us recollect ourselves. From this moment he is silent; he will pray aloud no more until the Preface.

The celebrant has said "*Oremus,*" but, contrary to the ordinary rubric, he does not recite a collect, or a prayer

properly so-called. It seems that something has disappeared at this point, what were called the Prayers of the Faithful, which occur here in all liturgies except the Roman rite. They were a kind of litany sung by the deacon to which the people answered *Kyrie eleison* and which the celebrant concluded with a Collect. But neither the eighth-century *Ordines Romani* nor the Sacramentaries mention this feature. Mgr. Duchesne conjectures that the solemn prayers (*orationes*) on Good Friday, in which the needs of the Church are represented to God, and in which we pray for the various ranks of the sacred Hierarchy, formed at one time part of the ordinary Roman Mass. He adds: "Nothing in their tenor connects them specially with the solemnities of the Passion or of Easter. They are prayers for the ordinary needs of the Church, for peace, for the Bishop, and for the whole Hierarchy, down to confessors (ascetics), virgins and widows; for the Roman Emperor; for the sick, the poor, prisoners, travellers, and sailors; for heretics, schismatics, Jews, and pagans. The same series of intentions occur repeatedly in the daily Liturgies of the Eastern Churches" (*Christian Worship*, p. 172). Later we shall see how the *Te igitur* takes the place of all these prayers.

The Offertory.

Having said "*Oremus,*" the priest recites in a low tone an antiphon which is called in the Missal the *Offertory.*

In order that we may rightly understand the meaning of the *Offertory*, let us briefly recall the ceremony of the *Offering.* It was at this moment that the faithful were accustomed to present the priest with gifts, either for the Sacrifice or for his own maintenance. As early as the second century St. Justin says: "Then bread and a

cup of wine and of water are brought to him who presides over the brethren." A procession was formed. First the men, then the women, made their offerings of bread and wine on white cloths; after them came the clergy, priests, Bishops, or the Pope himself; their offerings were only of bread. From the bread were selected some loaves, which were shortly to be consecrated, and a portion of the wine offered was poured into the celebrant's chalice. The bread destined for consecration was taken from the offering of the clergy; the wine, from that of the people.

The bread is unleavened; but it was only introduced in Rome between the ninth and the eleventh centuries; until then leavened bread was used. The primitive altar breads (more properly *loaves*) were round, marked with a cross and used to be called *corona*, crown. In the twelfth century the unleavened altar breads took their present shape. The wine was brought in little flasks, *amulæ*, and was poured into a large vessel called *scyphus* after it had been filtered through a strainer (*colum*). The use of white wine is a recent introduction. It is mentioned in the fourteenth century. Red wine was an excellent symbol of the blood of Jesus.

The bread not used for the Consecration was blessed and distributed to the people immediately after the Communion by the priest or deacon. It was called "Blessed Bread," or "Eulogy," from a Greek word meaning benediction. This "Blessed Bread" was to the early Christians a sign of union; they used to send it as a mutual gift to one another. This custom still exists in France and Italy, as also in the East. Families offer in their turn to the Church bread to be blessed and distributed to the congregation.

"There is deep mystery in the choice of bread and wine made by Our Lord to perpetuate His immolation under

these signs and to make Himself the divine food of souls." Wheat was given to man to be his food in penance when our first parents were driven out of Eden. God said then to Adam: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread" (Gen. iii. 19). So from the time of Eden until holy Mass was instituted wheat went through the centuries watered by the sweat and tears of humanity in penance. When it was thus made ready Our Lord Jesus Christ took it into His hands and blessed it in order to transform it into His sacrificed flesh; this is the mystery He renews unceasingly through the hands of His priests every day at the altar.

"Wine was given to man, to console him and to give him hope after the catastrophe of the flood; Noe's drunkenness was a figure of the divine madness of the Passion, of the impious insults, of the sleep of death upon the Cross and of the awakening at the resurrection" (Gréa, *op. cit.*, p. 33).

Until the eleventh century the bread and the wine were thus offered by the faithful. Little by little this practice fell into disuse as the Church became endowed with earthly goods, and was thus able to supply its needs from its own resources. The alms given nowadays to a priest that he may celebrate Mass for a particular intention may be considered as corresponding to the offerings of old. The only vestige, however, of the offering in the Mass itself is that still practised in some places at Masses for the Dead;[1] also at the consecration of a Bishop, the blessing of an

[1] This refers to a practice in Belgium and elsewhere on the Continent, where it is the custom at Masses for the Dead for the people to make an offering of money at the Offertory. After the priest has offered the chalice, he descends the altar steps and presents the pax to the members of the congregation. As each one kisses it the priest says, "*Requiescat in pace*"; at the same time an alms is given towards Masses for the repose of the departed.—NOTE TO ENGLISH EDITION.

Abbot, and the ordination of a priest an offering of a candle is made to the celebrant. Formerly the faithful gave at the Offertory what was necessary for the support of their pastors and for the upkeep of the church ; candles were used for the service of the sanctuary.

We can now understand what the Offertory was. It was the antiphon, psalm, or responsory which used to be sung while the faithful made their offerings or gifts. Until the fourth century these offerings were made in silence. The Offertory was introduced at Carthage in the time of St. Augustine. St. Gregory the Great gave to it its special form : it consisted of an antiphon and several verses from the Psalms. The antiphon, according to the practice of those days, was repeated before each verse, and the singing was continued until the moment when the priest, beckoning to the cantors to stop, turned towards the people and said : " *Orate, fratres*—Brethren, pray. . . ." This custom was still practised in Rome in the twelfth century. When the offering ceased to be made, the antiphon alone was thought sufficient to be sung. Generally it consists of a verse of some Psalm, though occasionally it is taken from some other book of Holy Scripture, and even in some cases it has been composed by the Church herself. The Offertories of the Mass for the Dead and of that for the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost are the only ones which still recall the ancient formula.

As to melody the Offertory is one of the richest pieces of Gregorian chant. More mystical and profound than either the Introit or the Gradual, it disposes our souls to recollection that thus they may fittingly assist at the Adorable Sacrifice about to be renewed. The Offertory then is a sublime and inspired prayer rising to the throne of God.

Prayers at the Offertory.

These prayers are not mentioned by the liturgists of the Middle Ages. In the old *Ordines Romani* there is nothing about them. Primitively the oblation was made silently. "The offertory prayers now in use are not indicated in the ancient books. They are, however, complete counterparts, as far as the meaning is concerned, of those employed by the Greek priests, and, doubtless, also by the Gallican priests, before the beginning of the Mass at the table of Prothesis" (Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 175), that is the table at which were prepared the bread and wine to be consecrated. For long, at the oblation in the Roman Mass, there was merely the offertory and the prayer called *Secret*. In the reign of Innocent III the Roman Church did not yet possess them; they were not used by her until the fourteenth century. In other Churches the priest, after placing the oblation on the altar, said the *Veni, Sanctificator* (see p. 123) and then the *Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas*.

The author of the *Micrologus*, who lived about the eleventh century, mentions only these two prayers.

We must insist on a truth which, as this explanation of the Mass proceeds, will be stressed again and again: the Eucharist is at the same time Sacrifice and Sacrament. Sacrifice primarily, in the next place Sacrament; two things completely distinct of themselves, undue consideration of which apart will result in neglect of their mutual and theological relationship to the prejudice of Eucharistic worship. This Victim about to be offered to the Blessed Trinity, should also, and preferably during the holy Sacrifice, become the food, the Bread of Life, of humanity. Mass, therefore, is an epitome of the whole of Eucharistic worship.

We must make one further observation which is most important, and without which the prayers that are said up to the time of the Consecration can hardly be understood. The prayers of the Oblation refer to a twofold object: first to the matter of the Sacrifice—that is, to the bread and wine—and secondly to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, into which it will shortly be changed. The prayer accompanying the offering of the bread and wine is intended, we repeat, to make this offering fit to be used for the august oblation of Jesus at transubstantiation, into which it passes in a sublime manner. But we should never forget that the offering made to the priest by the congregation is only presented by him to God at the great sacrificial prayer of the Canon. One of the splendours of the Mass is the absorption of our oblation by Christ's with which it is united. From this point of the Mass onwards the offering of bread and wine is necessarily moving towards the transubstantiation of its twofold matter into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This explains why, in all the prayers of the Oblation, as in those which precede the Consecration, the Church employs terms which can only be applied to the consecrated elements.

During the *Credo* the corporal has been spread upon the altar by the deacon. The subdeacon, vested with the humeral veil (from the Latin word *humerus*, shoulder), reverently brings to the altar the offerings of bread, followed by an acolyte with the wine. The deacon gives the priest the paten with the Host, for it is he who is the deputy of the people and who is charged to present to the celebrant the gifts offered. The paten (from the Latin *patere*, to be wide open) was formerly much larger than it is to-day; it was a real dish, capable of holding several small loaves, which were to be consecrated and distributed. The bread

on the paten is called the Host (from the Latin *hostia*, victim), because it is soon to become the Body of Christ, the real Victim of the Sacrifice.

The priest begins by following the rites described in the account of the Last Supper. "Jesus took bread" —*accepit Jesus panem*. Like the Master he receives it into those hands that ordination has made *holy and venerable*; he, too, lifts up his eyes to God his Almighty Father. The priest receives, then, from the hands of the deacon the paten with the Host, and raises it before his eyes; he then looks for an instant upon the Cross on the altar, and at once, again, upon the Host. He seems to say to God: "Behold, the Victim is prepared; deign to regard it favourably." He casts down his eyes, for he is about to confess himself a sinner. Indeed, whilst he holds the paten with the Host in his hands, he prays as follows:

Suscipe, sancte Pater, omnipotens, æterne Deus, hanc immaculatam hostiam, quam ego indignus famulus tuus offero tibi Deo meo vivo et vero, pro innumerabilibus peccatis et offensionibus et negligentiis meis, et pro omnibus circumstantibus, sed et pro omnibus fidelibus christianis vivis atque defunctis, ut mihi et illis proficiat ad salutem in vitam æternam. Amen.

Accept, O holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, this immaculate Host which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences and negligences, and for all here present, as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may profit both me and them unto life everlasting. Amen.

This prayer is found in the ninth-century *Liber precationum* (prayer-book) of Charles the Bald (823-77). A prayer of Roman origin would not have been written in the singular and refer to one individual. It was a private prayer for the use of layfolk afterwards adopted by the celebrant in order to offer his own host together with those of the congregation.

We should notice, too, that the oblation of the sacrifice,

although presented to the Blessed Trinity, is addressed directly to God the Father. It is done because creation is attributed, by *appropriation*,[1] particularly to the Father as are all works which come from the Almighty power of God. Now since sacrifice is the creature's homage, in this most solemn act of worship he prays particularly to the First Person of the Most Blessed Trinity. It was to the Eternal Father that Jesus Christ offered Himself on earth, and the Church wishes to follow His example. As in the Old Law, the Host is without blemish ; and it is about to become the sole Victim, immaculate and undefiled, Jesus Christ Himself, who alone can be pleasing to and can appease Him. Before the living and true God the priest is filled with the thought of his own unworthiness. He must pray first for himself, begging to be cleansed from every stain ; for as the Host is without blemish, so only pure hands should touch it. He then prays for all present, without exception ; finally he prays for the whole Church ; both living and dead are to share alike in the virtue of the Sacrifice, the great fruit of which should be that salvation which opens the gates of Heaven.

What a beautiful prayer ! Why do we not say it with the priest, why do we not enter into the humble and confident dispositions of the minister of God ? It is so short, and yet what a number of requests it expresses ! It is all-powerful on the lips and in the heart of him who recites it in union with Christ.

Then, having made the sign of the Cross with the paten on which it lies, the priest lays the Host upon the altar.

[1] By *appropriation* is meant the attribution to one divine Person of a perfection or an operation which is proper to the Three together ; this is done because of the relationship or special fitness of this perfection or operation with the character of the Divine Person concerned.

The Host is now, as it were, upon the Cross whereon Christ gave Himself as a Victim for us. Originally there were several hosts to be consecrated; they were arranged in the form of a cross. In some churches was said "*In nomine Patris,*" etc., a formula which explains the intervention of the sign of the Cross.

Meanwhile the deacon pours wine into the chalice, the subdeacon afterwards adding a few drops of the water which the celebrant has blessed. In the eighth century at a papal Mass — and our present custom is derived from this—a subdeacon went and asked for the water (*fontem*) from the Schola; he received it from the hands of the Archiparaphonista and took it to the archdeacon who poured, cross-wise, a sufficient quantity of it into the chalice.

The mixing of wine and water is one of the most ancien rites of the Holy Sacrifice. The Church adopted it in imitation of Jesus Christ, who in all probability consecrated a chalice which contained, according to Jewish custom, a small quantity of water. This tradition is confirmed by the early Fathers of the Church, for example, St. Justin, St. Irenæus and St. Cyprian, and the councils, particularly those of Carthage (397), *in Trullo* (698) and the holy Council of Trent. Another reason seems to have been to represent by the wine and water the blood and water which flowed from the side of the Saviour when pierced by the spear. In several Western Liturgies, e.g., in the Ambrosian rite and the Carthusian and Lyons uses, while the water is being poured into the chalice, these words are said: "*From the side of Jesus Christ there issued blood and water.*" However, the most profound reason is that revealed in the prayer recited by the priest when he blesses the water:

Deus ✠ qui humanæ substantiæ dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti, da nobis per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium, ejus divinitatis esse consortes, qui humanitatis nostræ fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus, Filius tuus, Dominus noster ; qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

O God, ✠ who in creating human nature didst wonderfully dignify it, and hast still more wonderfully renewed it, grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His Divinity, who deigned to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord ; who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

The supernatural work figuratively represented by the mixing of wine and water in the Sacrifice offered by the priest is the personal union of Christ the Eternal Word with His Sacred Humanity. The wine represents particularly His Divine Nature and the water His human nature. The very Roman prayer *Deus qui humanæ*[1] belonged once to the Christmas liturgy in which is celebrated the mystery of the union of two natures in Jesus Christ in unity of person. From this first and more profound mystery proceeds the second—that of our union with the Son of God. The very first Fathers of the Church seek to elucidate this mystery. St. John, in the Apocalypse, says that the water represents the nations, the wine Jesus Christ. From our union with Christ by sanctifying grace—a union which in some way deifies us—there results the formation of the mystical body of the Church, of which the Head is the God-Man and the members are the faithful. Since His Incarnation He is in a certain manner more to us ; He is the universal Source of all graces, which are His, and which He has received from His Father to shower upon us. He is the Vine, we the

[1] The prayer "*Deus qui humanæ*" is to be found in the Leonine, Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries. It was transferred to this place in the Holy Mass, with the addition "*per hujus aquæ et vini mysterium.*" It is very significative.

branches, and at the same time He is the nourishing Sap of the Vine. He is truly the Head, we truly the members, of that great body, the Church, in which only those are alive in whom the grace of the Head lives and abides.[1]

Now, as in the Mass Christ becomes the Victim of the Sacrifice, so also the faithful, who are inseparable from Him, are offered in Him and through Him to God, His Father and their Father. This is the meaning of the mysterious mixing of the wine and water.

On beginning the last of the above-mentioned prayers the priest blesses the water. The sign of the Cross used to be made over the wine and the water as they were both poured into the chalice. The origin of this sign of the Cross comes from the fact that *In nomine Patris*, etc., was said, as in the Mozarabic rite, over the water and the wine. The Dominicans still say it. The words have disappeared in the Roman rite, but the sign of the Cross continues to be made at the first words of the prayer. In Masses for the Dead *In nomine Patris*, etc., was not said ; hence the custom of not blessing the water at these Masses.

In very ancient times the celebrant used to pour the water into the chalice in the form of a cross as is required in all the *Ordines Romani* ; it is only since the preceding prayer was introduced that he directly blesses the water. Let us observe that the privilege conferred on the sub-deacon of pouring the water at High Mass barely dates from the fourteenth century. Until that time, as is still the custom with the Carthusians, it was the deacon who used to pour the water as well as the wine. For a time, at Rome, it was the priest who did so. Notice what is done in the Dominican rite : the preparation of the chalice

[1] Cf. Encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis* of Pope Pius XII, 29 June 1943.

takes place after the celebrant has read the Gospel at the *sedilia*. The subdeacon brings the chalice and it is he, the subdeacon, who pours in the wine and water, whereas the deacon, sitting beside the priest, holds the paten with the host.

The chalice being prepared, the deacon presents it to the priest, saying with him the following prayer :

Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris, tuam deprecantes clementiam, ut in conspectu divinæ majestatis tuæ, pro nostra et totius mundi salute cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Amen.

We offer to Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy Clemency, that in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty it may ascend as a sweet odour for our salvation, and for that of the whole world. Amen.

This prayer of offering corresponds with the *Suscipe, sancte Pater*. It is found in Missals only after the eleventh century.

During the recitation of this prayer the priest keeps his eyes fixed upon the cross. The deacon assists in holding up the chalice, saying the prayer with the celebrant ; the reason of this is that formerly chalices were very heavy, some weighing as much as ten, fifteen, or twenty pounds. They had to be larger than ours to hold sufficient wine for the communion of the priest, clergy, and faithful, who all at one time communicated under both species. The deacon, the immediate minister of the priest, helped to raise the chalice ; he is moreover in a special way the minister of the Precious Blood, and it was he who used to give communion with the chalice. On the other hand, let us always bear in mind that the deacon at the altar represents the people. It is he who has transferred to the celebrant the offering of the faithful ; the celebrant and, in the person of the deacon, the faithful will together beseech God graciously to accept the common offering ; therefore the formula is in the plural : " *We offer Thee . . .*"

If in the offering of the host the priest speaks in the singular it is because he is not helped by the deacon ; that is one reason. We have also mentioned another above.

We should notice the expression, "*The chalice of salvation.*" The Church here calls the chalice, by anticipation, the chalice of salvation, for in a short time it will contain the redeeming Blood of Christ, and that alone.

We pray "*for our salvation and for that of the whole world,*" for the aim of Christian life is to possess God. Now, our Sacrifice is the most efficacious prayer to obtain this salvation. St. Epiphanius calls it the "*continual salvation of the Church.*"

The priest places the chalice upon the altar, first forming with it the sign of the Cross, as he did with the paten and host, the reason being the same in both cases.

He places the chalice between the host and the cross of the altar. Until the fifteenth century it was put on the right side and in a straight line with the host, as the Greeks still do. This is merely a matter of convenience.

To prevent anything from falling into it, the deacon re-covers the chalice with the pall, which, as we have explained, is a reduced form of the corporal.

The subdeacon at length receives from the deacon the paten, which he covers with the extremity of the veil worn over his shoulders ; then he proceeds to the foot of the altar-steps, and takes his stand behind the priest. He holds the paten before his eyes till the end of the Pater Noster. This practice may be explained in different ways. In the *Ordo Romanus* (eighth century) there is mention of a special acolyte holding this paten. It is possible that in those days the paten was not empty but contained the *Sancta* referred to later on in the explanation of the *fraction.*

Until the sixth century the paten, just like the chalice, was in continual use during the whole of the Mass. Not

only was the Eucharistic Bread consecrated and broken upon it, but it was also allowed to remain there. Since the host is now placed on the corporal, the paten is not required, except when it is broken, after the Pater Noster. But it was a principle in the early Liturgy to leave nothing on the altar which was not needed for the Sacrifice. Besides, these large patens inconvenienced the celebrating priest. What was to be done ? To avoid having an extra minister and to occupy the subdeacon he was charged to hold the paten ; in some churches an acolyte fulfilled this office. As an acolyte may not directly touch the sacred vessels, he had to take a scarf or veil. The practice became general, and this is why the subdeacon always wears this vestment. He held the paten up a little to warn the congregation that the time for Communion approached—"*in signum instantis communionis*," as the Paris Missal has it. It may also have been done for convenience, so that he could support with his left hand the arm holding the paten. At Masses for the Dead and on Good Friday the paten is left on the altar and is not shown. As we have already said, these liturgical functions have retained more of the simplicity of the ancient Liturgy.

In the Dominican use there is only one oblation : the bread and wine are offered together.

Finally the priest bows down and, with hands joined and resting on the altar, sums up in a humble prayer the dispositions he must have, and the people with him, if his offering is to be acceptable to God :

In spiritu humilitatis, et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine, et sic fiat sacrificium nostrum in conspectu tuo hodie, ut placeat tibi, Domine Deus.

In the spirit of humility and contrition of heart, let us be received by Thee, O Lord, and grant that the sacrifice we offer this day in Thy sight may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God.

This prayer (which is of the eleventh century) being

finished, the priest, extending and raising his hands, immediately adds :

Veni, sanctificator omnipotens, æterne Deus, et benedic ✠ hoc sacrificium, tuo sancto nomini præparatum.

Come, O Sanctifier, Almighty, Eternal God, and bless ✠ this sacrifice, prepared for the glory of Thy holy Name.

The prayer *Veni, Sanctificator* is very old and comes from the Gallican liturgy. It is inspired, perhaps, by a passage in the second book of Machabees (ii, 10 : " And as Moses prayed to the Lord, a fire came down from heaven, and consumed the holocaust : so Solomon also prayed, and fire came down from heaven and consumed the holocaust "). The Stowe Missal (Irish, seventh–eighth century) contains this prayer and orders it to be sung three times. The Mozarabic Missal begins it thus : *Veni, Sancte Spiritus sanctificator* : " Come, Holy Spirit, sanctifier. . . ." This is the form in the mediaeval sacramentaries. Another common version is *Veni, Sanctificator omnium, Sancte Spiritus.*

Although this prayer is addressed to God, considered in His unity, many liturgies address here the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity ; they ask that the fire of the Holy Spirit may consume the bread and wine and change them into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. He it is who will produce the Son of God upon the altar, as He once formed His Sacred Body in Mary's womb. Such is the explanation suggested by St. Fulgentius in the sixth century.

At the word *bless* the priest makes the sign of the Cross over the double offering for the reason that is given below.

We know that the early Christians used the sign of the Cross even in their smallest actions as a prayer or as a short form of blessing. This sign, a real profession of faith, has always been regarded in the Church as an invocation to the Blessed Trinity and as a remembrance

before God of the Passion and merits of Jesus. To make the sign of the Cross is to call down upon oneself, or upon an object, God's blessing in the name of these two great mysteries of our faith. Thus the sign of the Cross takes the place of prayer and of blessing, so that to make it and to bless are, in the liturgy, one and the same thing.

But the word *bless* can have two meanings. In the first place it means the expression of a *wish*, a *desire*, a *prayer*, over whatever it is intended to be blessed, in order to purify it, to make it holy, to consecrate it. The sign of the Cross has an obvious connexion with this meaning, since it is from the Cross that all blessings flow. When, therefore, it accompanies a prayer it is an expression of this connexion and becomes itself a prayer. Thus it tends to the same end as the vocal prayer said with it, and, so to say, flows into the blessing that is invoked. This is the case with the Offertory invocation *Veni, Sanctificator*, etc.

Bless can also mean *speak well of*, from the Latin *benedicere*, or *praise, give thanks*, etc. Now although in this second meaning there is no connexion between the sign of the Cross and the word *bless*, even so the action frequently accompanies the word. It is certainly no longer a prayer, a petition, but a pious gesture suggested by the form and sound of the word. Thus the sign of the Cross is found accompanying words which are not prayers except in so far as they are praise or glorification, thanksgiving or exclamations of joy. It becomes merely a gesture of blessing provoked by the form of the word *benedicere*, *benedictus* or some other like it, but meaning *praise*, etc. This does not prevent our giving a reasoned and edifying meaning to this practice, since the Cross is the source of all graces, of all glory, and is the central mystery of the work of Jesus by which God is glorified. Thus the

sign of the Cross was formerly made at the *benedictio* in the verse *Genitori genitoque* of the *Pange lingua* ; also at *benedictum* which occurs in the *Salve Regina* just before the words *fructum ventris tui*. The sign of the Cross is made also at the *Benedictus qui venit* which follows the *Sanctus* at Mass, and at *benedixit* at the Consecration. These signs are obviously not petitions but have come to be used in these places by *attraction* owing to the sound and form of the word. It is probable that habit accounts for the practice of joining always the sign of the Cross to these words.

This last reason explains the otherwise incomprehensible signs made over the sacred elements after the consecration. St. Thomas asserts that they are no longer meant to bless, sanctify, consecrate. That is obvious. All liturgists and theologians agree that at this point they are not prayers. Why then are they to be found at this point of the Mass ? They are simply gestures. They can be given a deep, well-founded meaning, but their origin can be attributed only, it seems, to the habit acquired before the consecration of never saying the words *sacrifice*, *gifts*, *presents*, *oblation*, *body*, *blood*, *chalice* without at the same time signing them for a blessing as is called for by the words *benedic*, *benedicas*, *benedictam*, *benedixit* which precede or accompany them.

The words *host*, *bread*, *chalice*, *body*, *blood*, occur again after the consecration but without any word meaning to *bless*. Nevertheless, the priest accompanies these words with the same sign of the Cross on account of the habit already acquired.

We may mention, however, three other explanations suggested by various authors. Some say that the sign of the Cross, made sometimes before and sometimes after the consecration, operates as a designation of the

gifts that are to be or have been consecrated, particularly when they are joined to such pronouns as *hæc*, *hanc*, *quam*, etc. And what sign could be more fittingly used than the sign of our salvation to designate what procures it? Other liturgists explain the signs of the Cross after the consecration in this way. It shows, they say, that these gifts on the altar are indeed the Body and Blood of Jesus *crucified*. The Cross reminds us of this. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that the sign of the Cross made over the oblation after the consecration is obviously not meant as a blessing, a consecration, but is merely to recall the power of the holy Cross and to represent the Passion of Jesus.

Lastly a learned liturgist adduces the following profound reason. "At the holy Sacrifice," he says, "the Church is dealing with a Sacrament, and regards the Host solely through the sacramental veil. That which is present upon the altar both before and after the Consecration is an offering." And farther on he says: "We must look for the literal and true liturgical reason in the conception we have given of the Christian Sacrifice: the priest exercises his ministry on a Sacrament, and the Host signified by this Sacrament demands to be treated in accordance with all the conditions of a Host from one end of the Action to the other. Thus the signs of the Cross which come after the Consecration are to be explained in the same way as those which preceded it. In both cases the priest beseeches God graciously to accept the Host, and to draw for mankind an abundant blessing from its inexhaustible virtue. And in what rite could the sign of the Cross be more suitably used than in Holy Mass, which, in the words of Holy Church, accomplishes the work of our Redemption?" (*cf.* Desloge, *op. cit.*, pp. 365–368).

This is indeed a pleasing and beautiful explanation,

theological and profound. But, like the others, it appears additional to that given above which seems to be the historical one. There are very many rites and ceremonies in holy Mass and in the liturgy generally with quite a natural origin to which liturgists have afterwards attached —and on good grounds — a particular meaning which is worthy of our respect.

The Incensing of the Altar.

At this point takes place the second incensing of the altar. Just as at the beginning of the Mass of the Catechumens so too at the beginning of that of the Faithful the altar of God will be honoured and perfumed. In the *Ordo Romanus VI* (eleventh century) it may be seen that the bishop when he had blessed the oblations put incense into the thurible and offered it at the altar before the *Orate fratres* (which occurs later). It is to this sacrifice of incense that the prayer which follows directly no doubt refers.

The deacon presents the incense-boat to the celebrant, saying :

Benedicite, Pater Reverende. — A blessing, Reverend Father.

The priest blesses the incense, saying :

Per intercessionem beati Michaelis archangeli stantis a dextris altaris incensi, et omnium electorum suorum incensum istud dignetur Dominus bene✠dicere, et in odorem suavitatis accipere. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Through the intercession of blessed Michael the Archangel, standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all His elect, may the Lord deign to bless ✠ this incense, and to accept it as an odour of sweetness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The formula for the third blessing of the incense differs entirely, as we see, from that used at the commencement of the Mass and at the Gospel.

The Roman Church took it from the Mass of *Flaccus Illyricus*. The formula varied in different churches. The Dominicans have no other formula for the blessing of incense than *In nomine Patris*, etc.

This formula mentions St. Michael the Archangel. St. John, in his vision at Patmos, saw an Angel standing before the altar of Heaven with a golden thurible. The Fathers and the Liturgy have taken this Angel to be St. Michael. Many medieval Missals mention St. Gabriel rather, alluding to the narrative of St. Luke (i. 11). We believe, and in this we rely on the authority of many manuscripts and sacramentaries, that the author of our formula had St. Gabriel in mind, and that a mistake has been made. Who can say how St. Michael was substituted for St. Gabriel and by whom ? The Church has nevertheless maintained the name of St. Michael at this point.[1]

This prayer is very beautiful and in a special manner enhances the blessing of the incense. There is something here besides the altar to be filled with its sweet odour ; the gifts thereon must be impregnated with it, and the divine blessing must be allowed to penetrate into them.

Let us repeat that incense is a symbol of our prayers. If the priest incenses the offerings of bread and wine, it is to signify more clearly that our prayers accompany them. The incensing of the oblations is not so ancient in the Latin Church as it is in the Greek. In fact the *Ordines Romani I, III, VI* make no mention of it. But Hincmar of Rheims, however, writing in 850, already mentions it. By the eleventh century it was almost universally practised : *pene ab omnibus usurpatur*, says the *Micrologus*.

[1] Decision of the S.C.R., Sept. 25, 1705. Bossuet inserted the name of Gabriel in the Missal he edited. The Paris Missal avoided the difficulty by omitting the name and saying simply " Through the intercession of Thy holy Archangel. . ."

At Rome it was the custom after the eleventh century.

The priest, after receiving the thurible from the hands of the deacon, makes with it thrice the sign of the Cross over the oblations; these signs of the Cross may be explained by the *In nomine Patris*, etc., which used to be said at this point in some churches, as nowadays with the Carthusians. Then to saturate them, so to speak, with its perfume, he passes it again three times round the chalice. Meanwhile he says the following prayer:

Incensum istud a te benedictum ascendat ad te, Domine, et descendat super nos misericordia tua.

May this incense, which has been blessed by Thee, ascend to Thee, O Lord, that Thy mercy may descend upon us.

Then he incenses with three triple swings the cross of the altar, reciting meantime this fervent prayer, taken from Psalm cxl:

Dirigatur, Domine, oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo.

Let my prayer, O Lord, be directed as incense in Thy sight.

Afterwards, as at the beginning of Mass, he incenses again the altar and its relics. This incensing of the altar is a symbolic offering of the prayers of the Church and calls to mind the Angel of the Apocalypse offering on the altar of heaven the prayers of the saints in a golden thurible. Continuing the Psalm to occupy his mind with the thought of holy things he says:

Elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum.

The lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice.

Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiæ labiis meis.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips.

Ut non declinet cor meum in verba malitiæ ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis.

Incline not my heart to evil words to make excuses in sins.

He finally returns the thurible to the deacon, saying:

Accendat in nobis Dominus ignem sui amoris, et flammam æternæ caritatis. Amen.	May the Lord enkindle in us the fire of His love and the flame of His eternal charity. Amen.

The deacon then proceeds to incense the priest and the assistants; which practice is common to all rites. He incenses the priest first, to show reverence to him who here represents the Adorable Person of the Eternal Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord. At Paris the deacon used to kneel while incensing the priest.

Afterwards he advances to incense the choir. This perfume with which he fills the sanctuary is the symbol of Jesus Christ. The grace of this incense should also be offered to the whole Christian people; and so the thurifer will shortly bear it to the faithful. It will enable them to be "*unto God the good odour of Christ*" (2 Cor. ii. 15)—that is, perfect Christians, worthy of making the world appreciate the truths and holy precepts of the Gospel.

At length the subdeacon is incensed, and finally, doubtless out of humility, the deacon receives the grace which he has conveyed to others. This incensing of clergy and people is a symbol of their participation in the offering of the prayers of the Church mentioned above. With Jesus the Christian congregation constitutes the sacrificial victim; all of it is incensed. That is the real reason for this incensing.

The Lavabo.

The celebrant, after he has been incensed by his minister, remains at the Epistle side of the altar, where he washes his hands—that is, the tips of the thumbs and the index fingers.

Historically, this ceremony is explained by the fact that the priest had received into his hands the offerings of the

faithful—at least, this is the explanation generally given. It should be noticed, however, that the rite of the washing of the hands is anterior to that of the *offering*. Sala, the editor of the learned liturgist Bona, informs us that, before the institution of the *offering*, Bishop and priests, after the Mass of Catechumens, and before their dismissal, imposed hands on the catechumens and public penitents, which rite of itself explains the reason of the washing of hands. This washing of hands before the Offertory, and that which follows it, were practised throughout the Middle Ages. A bishop does so still at a pontifical Mass. *Ordo Romanus I* in the eighth century required the pope to wash his hands. Until the eleventh century the rite was firmly fixed; after that date it tended to disappear. This washing of hands was not of obligation in the Roman Church at the end of the fourteenth century.

The washing in the present position—at the *Lavabo*—is explained as we indicated above. By receiving the gifts of the faithful and by handling the thurible the priest may have soiled his hands. He cleanses them. That is the usual explanation. But the ceremony is primarily symbolic and serves to remind the celebrant that his heart should be pure from every stain. Such also should be the disposition of all who assist at the Holy Sacrifice. In the first centuries of Christianity the faithful used to wash their hands at the fountains which were to be found at the entrances of the churches. All that now remains of this purification is our custom of making a sign of the Cross upon ourselves with holy water on entering a church. In monasteries these fountains were placed in the quadrangle, or *préau*, the small court within the enclosure, which can still be seen in many cases. The water of these fountains was reserved for this symbolical cleansing of the monks.

The ceremony of the washing of the hands takes place

at the Epistle side of the altar, as the piscina is at that side. This at one time consisted of a hollow stone.

Meanwhile the priest recites Psalm xxv from the verse, "*Lavabo inter innocentes . . .*" to the end. The remainder of the Psalm has no connection with the ceremony: the Church requires the priest to say it as a sanctification of the rite he is carrying out, joining prayer to action. Formerly only the first verse was said and nowadays the Dominicans recite only the first three verses. In some places *Amplius lava me* and the rest of Psalm L was said. The office of washing the priest's hands belonged originally to the acolytes; but it has for long been the subdeacon's function. But the former practice has continued in Mass for the Dead. The first word of this prayer has always been used to denote the ceremony of the washing of hands. The Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil mention it in their day. In Masses for the Dead and in those of Passion-tide the *Gloria Patri* is omitted, since it is a sign of joy and triumph. We here give this extract from the Psalm; its words reveal to us better than anything else the mysterious meaning of the ceremony:

Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas: et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine,

I will wash my hands among the innocent; and will compass Thy altar, O Lord,

Ut audiam vocem laudis, et enarrem universa mirabilia tua.

That I may hear the voice of Thy praise, and tell of all Thy wondrous works.

Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ, et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam, et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam,

Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked, nor my life with bloody men,

In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt: dextera eorum repleta est muneribus.

In whose hands are iniquities: their right hand is filled with gifts.

Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum: redime me, et miserere mei.

But as for me, I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy on me.

Pes meus stetit in directo : in ecclesiis benedicam te, Domine.

My foot hath stood in the direct way ; in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord.

Gloria Patri, etc.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Let us unite ourselves with the priest at this precious moment when the great Action is about to commence. Let us recite with faith, humility, and contrition of heart this magnificent Psalm, this earnest prayer : "*I will wash my hands among the innocent, and will compass Thy altar, O Lord. . . .*" No prayer can better dispose us for that sincere and practical detestation of even the least stains of sin.

The Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas.

The priest, having finished the *Lavabo*, goes to the middle of the altar, where, with hands joined and with head bent down, he says the following prayer :

Suscipe, sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem quam tibi offerimus ob memoriam Passionis, Resurrectionis, et Ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri : et in honorem beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis, et beati Joannis Baptistæ, et sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et istorum, et omnium Sanctorum : ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem : et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in cælis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation which we make to Thee in memory of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honour of the blessed Mary, ever a virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of these and of all the Saints ; that it may be available to their honour, and our salvation ; and that they may deign to intercede for us in Heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The above text, not at all Roman in style, which is found substantially the same in the Oriental Liturgies, was originally merely a prayer of devotion ; this explains why many Churches have it not in their Missal. We may notice in passing that the Roman Liturgy in its prayers

hardly ever addresses the blessed Trinity. This prayer, with the exception of the *Secret*, perhaps the oldest prayer of Oblation, was essentially an offertory prayer, a prayer at the offering of bread and wine brought up by the congregation, and said at the time the priest received this offering. The *Micrologus* recalls that in the eleventh century it was recited merely by ecclesiastical custom and not by virtue of a law. The Carthusians do not say it even now, which proves that in the eleventh century it was not the rule. The Dominicans, who have kept the rite in use in most of the churches of France in the thirteenth century, say it to the exclusion of every other prayer at the offering of the oblation which they carry out in a single act, offering bread and wine simultaneously. They mention only Our Lord's Passion. This prayer used to vary a great deal. The old Missal of Auxerre calls it the *Oratio Sancti Ambrosii* (the prayer of St. Ambrose). In the Mass of *Flaccus Illyricus* it is called the *oratio quotidiana et generalis* (daily and general prayer). As it was merely a prayer of devotion at first it was recited only on solemn feasts ; it even varied, for on certain days mention was made in it of the sick, the dead, the needs of the Church, of Princes, of priests, etc. The names of different saints whom it was desired to honour on particular days were freely inserted ; the saints whose relics are in the altar stone are probably designated by the *istorum* (" of these ") of the *Suscipe*. This word has been replaced elsewhere by the letters N.N. as may be seen at the *Te igitur* of the Canon. St. Pius V inserted it eventually in the Missal, thus making it of obligation.

This prayer is the last of all those of the Oblation, the elements of which it completely sums up ; it mentions the Divine Person to whom it is offered, the nature of the

Holy Sacrifice, the part which the Saints of Heaven should take in it, and the succours which the Church on earth may expect from it.

The oblation with which we are dealing here is the offering of the whole Church united to Jesus Christ her Head. This offering is the commemoration not only of the Passion but also of the whole life of our God and Redeemer. For it is at Mass that the merits of Jesus Christ are applied to us. Now if our Saviour merited our salvation primarily through His Passion, which was its necessary condition, it can nevertheless be said that by reason of this Passion accepted in advance, He was able to merit for us during His whole life. We can even say that He merited on our behalf, as the exemplary cause, this or that grace in the mysteries of His life ; and so true is this that the Mass is as it were the realisation of the merits obtained by Jesus Christ in every one of the stages of His existence among us. The prayer *Suscipe* speaks only of His Passion, Resurrection and Ascension ; it might well mention in addition His Incarnation and Birth as is done in the Lyonnese rite.

There is nothing which gives glory to Our Lady and the saints in the same way as Mass celebrated in their honour, for careful consideration shows that it is Jesus who is glorified in those whom the sacrifice of Calvary has raised so high by transforming them in Christ, their divine ideal.

The preparatory Oblation of the Faithful is made in honour of the Saints, for whom it is a very great honour to be mentioned here. Mary, the Mother of God, is the first to share in this privilege, and she shares more largely ; then come St. John the Baptist, the greatest of all the children of men ; the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, those pillars of the Church ; the Saints whose relics

repose in the consecrated stone and are thus identified with the very throne of the Immaculate Lamb; and, finally, all those who, from the time of Abel, have been pleasing to God and have in union with Christ been made victims acceptable in His sight.

O ineffable Sacrifice, who can tell thy greatness? who can comprehend thy value and thy power?

The Orate Fratres.

The priest kisses the altar, and, turning to the people, extends and then rejoins his hands, saying in a voice a little raised: "*Orate, fratres*—Pray, brethren, that. . . ."

The Action becomes more and more solemn. The priest feels the need of complete union with God; he is about to enter into the Holy of Holies; therefore does he take leave of the people, towards whom he will not turn again until the Sacrifice has been consummated. "*Brethren, pray,*" for I am about to communicate more intimately with the Lord—pray that He may accept our Sacrifice.

Formerly the words *Orate* and *Orate pro me* alone were said, and the Dominicans, who are faithful to so many of the old customs, still say merely *Orate, fratres*. The formula in any case is not originally from Rome where *Oremus* would have been the expression used. It is to be found after the eleventh century; it was said at the time of the Pontiff's offering at the altar.

He continues in a low voice:

. . . *ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat apud Deum Patrem omnipotentem.*	. . . that my sacrifice and yours may find acceptance with God the Father Almighty.

These words are simply the development of the priest's invitation to prayer. A similar formula is found in the *Codex Sancti Dionysii*, a manuscript of the time of Charle-

magne (768-814). It was only gradually that they were admitted into the Liturgy ; this is why the celebrant says them under his breath. The word " sacrifice " designates the offering of bread and wine, the matter of this sacrifice.

Other forms are met with ; for example, the following in a Missal of Utrecht : " *Brethren, pray for me, a sinner, to the Lord our God.*" We must notice the expression, *My sacrifice and yours ;* it clearly shows that the Sacrifice of the priest is also that of the faithful, who offer it with him and through him.

This request, made to the congregation by the celebrant, as well as an exhortation to prayer was meant at the same time as a demand for silence for the Secret which follows. Immediately afterwards, according to the prescriptions of many monastic constitutions, those in choir rose from their stalls and bowed low during the recitation of the *Secret.*

The server—that is, the subdeacon at a Solemn Mass, the deacon at Mass for the Dead (the deacon is then free as at this Mass he has not to incense the choir at the Offertory)—replies :

Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium de manibus tuis ad laudem et gloriam nominis sui, ad utilitatem quoque nostram, totiusque Ecclesiæ suæ sanctæ. Amen.

May the Lord receive the Sacrifice from thy hands to the praise and glory of His Name, and to our benefit, and that of His holy Church. Amen.

This beautiful and profound prayer, more recent than the *Orate fratres,* states and briefly sums up the ends of the Sacrifice, which are the honour of God and the benefit of the Church. Neither the early *Ordines Romani* nor the old Gallican Missals prescribe any answer to the celebrant's request. It is probable that originally the people used to pray in silence for him as their devotion moved them. Neither the Carthusians nor the Dominicans have any

answer in their Missal to the *Orate fratres*. This formula has been recited in the Roman Church since the twelfth century. Before that it varied according to the different Churches. For example, sometimes there was said this extract from Psalm xix: "*May God send thee help from the sanctuary and defend thee out of Sion. May He be mindful of all thy sacrifices, and may thy whole-burnt offering be made fat.*" Or, again, this other beautiful passage from Holy Scripture: "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee*" (Luke i. 35).

To this prayer the priest replies in a low voice, *Amen;* he then recites the Secret.

The Secret.

The Offertory began with *Dominus vobiscum* and *Oremus*; then the offering was made as we have described; meanwhile the Offertory antiphon was sung. The prayer which followed was the collect called *Secret* with *Per omnia sæcula*, etc., at the end. That was all.

In all the old Sacramentaries the Secret prayer was called the *Oratio super oblata*, the prayer over the oblation, because it was said over the bread and wine that had been offered. Indeed in some Missals the priest was directed to spread his hands over the chalice as he said it. In the Roman liturgy that is the oldest name for the Secret. It was also called *Oratio plebis*, that is the prayer which was said when the faithful alone, the holy people as they are called in the Canon, *sed et plebs tua sancta*, remained in church. By this time, in fact, the catechumens had left. According to some liturgists that provides the reason for the name *Secret*; and it is not so-called because it is said silently. In fact, none of the ancient Missals prescribes that it should be said silently. Originally it was said aloud as the natural

sequel to the *Oremus* at the beginning of the Offertory. And nowadays in the Ambrosian rite it is always said aloud.

The word *Secret* is derived from the Latin *secernere* which makes its participle *secretum* and means *set apart*. The prayer was said when the faithful had been separated from catechumens and penitents. And just as the prayer said at the beginning when the people were all gathered together was called *Collect* from the word *colligendo*, in the same way that which was said when the faithful were separated from those who could not be present at the sacrifice was called *Secret* from the word *secernendo*. Other liturgists say that it is called *Secret* because it is said over the bread and wine destined for the holy Sacrifice, and set apart from the offerings that were to be used as *Eulogies* (mentioned above).

On the other hand it must be made clear that since the ninth century liturgists have called this prayer *Secret* because it is said in a low voice. Even the Canon used to be called *secreta* because it was thus recited in a low voice, in the Latin Church at least. Whether the Secret was said in this way in earlier times, we do not know, nor in fact do we know why it is so said.

Originally this prayer was said in the same way as the Collect : the people having prayed for some time in silence, the celebrant spoke aloud to God in the name of all. Later, the priest ceased to raise his voice, perhaps because of the other prayers interpolated later between the initial *Oremus* of the Offertory and the *Secret*, prayers that to some extent usurp the function of the latter.

The Secret, with the Collect and the Post-Communion, of which we shall speak later on, is one of the principal prayers of the Mass. It is not preceded by an "*Oremus*," as the "*Orate, Fratres*" makes this unnecessary. Almost all the Secrets amount to asking God that He would favourably

receive the gifts upon the altar, and that He would enable us by His grace to put ourselves into such a state that we also may be presented to Him as a victim pleasing in His sight.

The celebrant ends the Secret, and also the last of the commemorations, if any, with the words, "*Per omnia sæcula sæculorum*—For ever and ever," which are pronounced in a loud voice after the commemorations, or, if there are none, after the Secret.

This conclusion of the prayer here is not, as has been said by some, the beginning of the *Preface*. No; if the rubric directs the priest to raise his voice, it is merely that the people may know the correct moment to say *Amen* in answer to the *Secret*. St. Jerome tells us that this *Amen* was heard resounding on all sides in the churches, like a clap of thunder.

According to the ancient *Ordines Romani* and until the thirteenth century the subdeacons answered the *Amen*, which here suitably ends this part of the Mass—viz., the *Oblation*. It is the Christian people approving of all that has been done, prepared, and said; the moment for the immolation of the Divine Victim is nigh. The Liturgy becomes more recollected and more sublime.

§ 2. The Oblation of the Victim.

From the Preface to the Pater Noster.

Et elevatis oculis in cœlum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, Tibi gratias agens benedixit. . . .

And lifting up His eyes to Thee, God, His almighty Father in heaven, and giving thanks to Thee He blessed it. . . .

We have come now to the most important part of the holy Sacrifice, the Action of the Sacrifice, the *Oblation of the Victim*. This part extends from the *Preface* to the *Pater Noster*. We must study it with special care and more ardent piety. What mysteries, illuminations, and revelations are to be found here! It is the longest, the most sacred and the most fundamental part of Holy Mass. We give in the first place a general idea of it as a help towards understanding its solemn meaning.

We should recall at this point the explanation which was given of the *Gloria in excelsis*.[1] There are two principal prayers in the hymn: a prayer of praise and a prayer of impetration. It was said that this was a complete summary of the whole Mass.

Now, when the matter of the Sacrifice has been made ready, offered and sanctified, and when, victims with the Victim, we come before God to be sacrificed, that is the proper moment for the functioning of the priesthood. This rite, called by Christian antiquity the Eucharistic prayer or thanksgiving, in which the bread and wine are sanctified, consecrated, made into *Eucharist*, is the Mass of the Faithful. That part we now call the Canon is called by St. Justin, a martyr of the second century, the thanksgiving. "The gifts are brought to the president and he taking them sends up praise and glory to the Father of all through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and proceeds by long prayers to the Eucharist (or thanksgiving) . . . when he has ended all the people cry out *Amen*." Notice that the word Eucharist has not in St. Justin the meaning of Canon as we understand it to-day; the Canon did not then exist. At this period, as one of his expressions proves, the celebrant still improvised the

[1] See *ante*, p. 70.

Eucharistic prayer " with all his strength," although he followed a central theme which even at that time had become traditional. But for him, as for us, the Eucharist is a true thanksgiving.

This thanksgiving in a still deeper sense is the very immolation and oblation of the Man-God. As it is renewed on the altar it has been called *the mystery of the most holy action*. This expression is found in Africa in the fourth century. *Agere agendam*, or *agendum celebrare*, is the expression used for Mass. In the sixth and seventh centuries *the Action* means the Preface and Canon.

This great mystery is one both of infinite praise and of powerful impetration ; the liturgy of the Mass of the faithful has fixed the terms of both. Through this praise and through this impetration all honour and glory are given to the heavenly Father ; it is perfect worship carried out divinely in Jesus Christ, with Him and through Him : it is a complete thanksgiving.

To this mystery of the divine Action there must be a fitting introduction ; we call it the Preface of the Mass. It is an expression of the praise paid to God by Jesus Christ and by us with Him, for His great glory, that praise which effects the work of Redemption and of which the life-giving fruits, particularly those corresponding to the day's feast, are applied by Christ to every one of us.

Prepared and introduced by that admirable *prayer of thanksgiving*, the Preface, the Canon is, then, above all a *Prayer of Impetration*. There is found in it throughout the same ardent and reiterated supplication, beseeching God, not so much to work the mystery of Transubstantiation, as efficaciously to accept the Sacrifice *by rendering it salutary for us* and by realizing all the purposes for which it is offered. For the Mass is the *oblation of the sacrificed Victim*.

This propitiatory prayer, partly preceding and partly following the sacrifice and the oblation, benefits both the Church militant and the Church suffering. And these two are aided by the Church triumphant invoked in her saints, particularly those of the day. In this union of all sections of the Church is achieved the communion of saints which is the complement and crown of our union with the Sacrifice, our sacramental communion which unites us to the Priest and Victim of this unique Sacrifice. In it Jesus Christ is both centre and fullness, the divine Eucharist, Sacrifice and Sacrament. From the liturgical point of view the Canon ends there.

That, then, is the oblation of the Victim. In it we encounter the greatness and sublime majesty of Christ. For it is primarily He who prays therein and nowhere else is His victorious mediation brought more actively to bear. And since it is Christ who " being come a high priest of the good things to come . . . by His own blood entered once into the holy of Holies, having obtained eternal redemption " (Hebr. ix. 11–12), who, in other words, is pontificating in heaven, since it is the Lamb once offered on Calvary who is ever " standing as it were slain " (Apoc. v. 6), in heaven, it follows that this *mystery of the sacred action*, the Mass, is the same action in time and in eternity, in heaven and on earth, taking place here below and eternally present in the glory of the saints. The Old Law was a figure of these things which are now brought to pass in the present and confirmed in eternity. " Jesus Christ yesterday and to-day : and He is the same for ever " (Hebr. xiii. 8).

We should not imagine, however, that there is a material altar in heaven like there is on earth. What is meant is that God is present at our sacrifice, that He receives at the same time from Jesus Christ in heaven and from

the priest at the altar the same Victim. It is an expression of the unity and everlastingness of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, and that He who offers Himself on the altar on earth, whom we offer and who is in heaven " always living to make intercession for us " (Hebr. vii. 25), is one and the same.

If in heaven He is " the Lamb standing as it were slain " it means that He presents to His Father the blood-stained marks of His Passion, the glorious wounds in His feet, His hands and His sacred side, and the infinite merits of His victory over Satan and death ; but He is *living* in heaven, for He is *standing*. Thus it is that Christ is priest, victim and altar of His own sacrifice.

We can now study these wonders in detail.

THE CANON OF THE MASS

The Preface.

The *Preface* (*præ-fatio*, exordium or foreword) is a solemn introduction to the most sacred portion of the Mass, that called, according to the Greek, the *Canon* or *Rule of the Consecration ;* for this reason in olden times it formed part of the Canon. For several centuries it has been detached from it, as may be seen in our Missals, if we look at the text of the *Ordinary of the Mass*. The Gelasian Sacramentary inserts *Incipit canon actionis* before the Preface. *Ordo Romanus I* (eighth century) already considers it as separated from the Canon. However this may be, out of respect for the history of the Liturgy, and especially on account of the deep meaning of the Preface, in our commentary we shall consider it as part of the Canon.

The Preface has received different titles : the Roman Rite calls it the *Preface ;* the ancient Gallican Rite the *Con-*

testation, because in it the powers of Heaven are invoked as witnesses, or the *Immolation*, the Mozarabic Missal names it the *Illation*, that is Oblation, but these words extend to the whole sacrificial action. The name *Preface* has prevailed in the Roman Church.

"Originally this first part of the Consecration prayer was very long. It contained a list of all the benefits for which we thank God, beginning with creation, going through most of the Old Testament and so coming to Isaias and his mention of the angels who introduce the Sanctus (Isaias vi. 3). It is still comparatively long and contains such allusions in the Eastern rites. At Rome it has been shortened, leaving only the general expression: *nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere*. The mention of the angels had to remain because of the *Sanctus*. . . . The words: *Et ideo*, at present almost meaningless, would then originally have referred to the list of benefits mentioned above" (Fortescue: *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy*, p. 317).

From early times the Preface has kept, then, a characteristic form. It always begins with the dialogue between the Pontiff and his people leading up to the *Trisagion* and *Sanctus* in a final sentence which refers to the heavenly choirs.

The Greek and Armenian Churches have only one Preface for the whole year. The Roman Church had formerly as many Prefaces as feasts; each indicated the character of the mystery commemorated, to invite the faithful to give thanks to Almighty God. In the Sacramentary attributed to Pope St. Leo the Great we find two hundred and sixty-seven Prefaces; and there must have been many more, for part of this collection is now missing, that from January to April. The Gelasian Sacramentary contains our common Preface and fifty-three others. The Gregorian

has no more than ten. There are fourteen Prefaces in use to-day in the Roman Missal reformed by St. Pius V. Ten of them are taken from the Gregorian Sacramentary. These Prefaces are: that called the *Common*, which is very ancient, and those for Christmas, the Epiphany, Lent, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, those of the Holy Trinity, the Apostles, and the Holy Cross. In 1095 Urban II (1088–1099) added that of the Blessed Virgin, and in 1917 two others, of St. Joseph and for the Dead, were introduced by Benedict XV. Pius XI added the Preface of Christ the King in 1925 and that of the Sacred Heart in 1929. Some of the great religious Orders possess another Preface—that of their Holy Founder. The Church has lately granted to all who ask permission for them Prefaces for Advent, All Saints, St. John the Baptist, the dedication of churches.

These different Prefaces are read on the feasts to which they are assigned, and during the octaves of the same. That of the Holy Trinity is sung on Sunday, as Sunday is especially consecrated to honouring this mystery. At other times, the Common Preface is said. As the last-mentioned is the one most frequently used in the Liturgy, we give it here:

Dominus vobiscum,	The Lord be with you,
Et cum spiritu tuo.	And with thy spirit.
Sursum corda.	Lift up your hearts.
Habemus ad Dominum.	We have them lifted up unto the Lord.
Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
Dignum et justum est.	It is meet and just.
Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique gratias agere, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem	It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God, through Christ our Lord. By

majestatem tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates. Cœli cælorumque Virtutes ac beata Seraphim socia exultatione concelebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti jubeas deprecamur supplici confessione dicentes : Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, etc. . . .

whom the Angels praise Thy Majesty, the Dominations adore, the Powers tremble before it, the Heavens and the Heavenly Virtues, and the Blessed Seraphim do celebrate with united joy. With whom we beseech Thee to command that our voices be admitted in suppliant confession, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, etc. . . .

A few words of explanation may be added.

The final words of the Secret, "*Per omnia sæcula sæculorum*," the priest says in a loud voice, so that the people can answer *Amen* and thus ratify the petitions of the Secret. The priest continues : "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you," etc., but he does not turn towards the people, for he took leave of them at the *Orate, Fratres*. Moreover it would have been superfluous for him to have done so in the early ages of the Church, for immediately before the Preface the gates of the sanctuary were closed and the curtains drawn so that he could not be seen by the congregation. It appears that at Rome and elsewhere in the West this custom was not observed, but it is still practised by the Armenians, the Russians, the Copts and others in the East.

"*Sursum corda*—Lift up your hearts." This exclamation is very ancient. Already, in the third century, St. Cyprian explained it to his people. "The priest," he says, "before beginning the prayer (Canon), prepares the minds of the brethren by this preface : '*Sursum corda*—Lift up your hearts,' that the people may be warned by their own reply, '*Habemus ad Dominum*—We have them lifted up unto the Lord,' of the obligation they are under of being occupied solely with God. Let us, then, close our hearts to all else than the Lord, and let us not allow His enemy to approach us whilst we are begging of God His

graces." The Greek liturgies pray in this way. Mgr. Batiffol writes : " St. Augustine in 390 could write that daily throughout the whole world the human race in unison answers that it has its heart lifted up to God : *respondet sursum corda se habere ad Dominum*" (*L'Eucharistie*, p. 196).

The priest proceeds : "*Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro*—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." This exclamation is found at Jerusalem, Antioch and in Africa. Whilst he pronounces these words he raises his eyes to Heaven and joins his hands, expressing by these gestures the ardour of his desires. This invitation to the faithful there clearly indicates the character of the Preface ; it is essentially the *eucharistic prayer*, or *prayer of thanksgiving*. We thank God in it for all His benefits, but chiefly for that of the Incarnation, which has given us the means of offering at this moment to God the Father the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of His Divine Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour. The people answer : "*Dignum et justum est*—It is meet and just." This acclamation also is very old. It is one of those that used to be customary at Rome in the Senate and elsewhere. Some of them have been taken over by the liturgy.

The priest, holding his hands raised and extended, proceeds with the Preface in a *becoming and clear voice*, as says the rubric. In Low Masses *it is necessary* that he should be able to be sufficiently heard by the congregation ; this is the rule with regard to any part of the Liturgy that at a solemn celebration would be regularly sung.

Then the priest, approving what the congregation has just replied, utters the great thanksgiving, the *magnum sacramentum in sacrificio Novi Testamenti* in St. Augustine's words : "*It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee*" ; but no act of thanksgiving is more worthy of God the

Father than that which rises up to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The rest of the Preface is penetrated with this last thought : Jesus Christ is our Head, our Sovereign Mediator ; He is likewise the Head of the heavenly hosts, for in Him, as St. Paul says, the Angels have been created (Col. i. 16) ; with us they form the complete and perfect body of His Church ; from Him, as their Head, they derive all their sanctity and glory. At this solemn moment they are united with us in order to celebrate the mercy of the Lamb, who comes once again to take away the sins of the world. Let us in humility and fear say with them the *Sanctus*.

The Sanctus.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

All the Liturgies, both Eastern and Western, have the *Sanctus* at Mass ; but it occurs in different places, and is accompanied by more or fewer words. With the Greeks it is the *Trisagion*, a hymn taken in part from Isaias, consecrated to the Holy Trinity. This has been called the *Hymn of Victory*, because the words which follow the thrice-repeated *Sanctus* express the majesty and invincible power of God.

As is well known, the *Sanctus* made the first break in the Canon and so caused the separation of the Preface from the latter. The *Liber Pontificalis* attributes the introduction of the *Sanctus* to Pope Xystus (second century) but the text is of doubtful authenticity. In any case the *Sanctus* goes back to a very early date. Allusions to the liturgical *Trisagion* can be found in the *Epistle*

of St. Clement of Rome, in Tertullian and many other Fathers, down to those of the fourth century. St. Augustine, however, appears not to know it, though the *Sanctus* was certainly known in Africa in the fifth century. The Fifth Catechetical Instruction of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (347–348) and the Liturgy of the *Aposolic Constitutions* are among the first to mention the *Sanctus* in connexion with the Mass. The Council of Vaison enjoins its use at all Masses. Some ancient Capitularies (A.D.789) observe "that the priest will unite himself with the Holy Angels and with the people of God, that all may sing with one voice the *Sanctus*." Later it was considered sufficient, as nowadays it is, for the priest to recite it in a low voice, no doubt because of the long modulations with which the hymn was embellished. In any case, he could not commence the Canon until the choir had finished.

At the *Sanctus*, priest and ministers bow low out of respect for the holiness of the Most High God and on account of the last words of the Preface: *supplici confessione dicentes*, "in suppliant confession saying." At the *Sanctus* a little bell is rung to warn the congregation that the priest is about to commence the great and solemn part of the Mass—viz., the *Canon*, during which the Consecration will take place. The *Sanctus* is a profession of faith, for it teaches the Unity of God and the Trinity of the Divine Persons: "*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of hosts.*" These are the hosts of the *heavenly army*.

The verse *Benedictus qui venit* appears to be a later introduction than the Sanctus. The *Apostolic Constitutions* insert it as the people's answer at the elevation after the Communion. Finally, in the verse which terminates the Sanctus confession is made of the Incarnation and Redemption. *Hosanna* is a Hebrew word which signifies *Save us, I beseech you.* All three Divine Persons indeed

co-operate in the work of our Redemption, through Jesus Christ, "*the Blessed One who came in the Name of the Lord.*"

The priest makes the sign of the Cross whilst saying the words, "*Benedictus qui venit. . . .*" According to ancient liturgists, it was the rule to make the sign of the Cross when reciting texts taken from the Holy Gospel.

And the word *Benedictus*, as we said above, gives rise to this sign ; or perhaps the expression *In nomine Domini* is the reason for it. Following a recent decision of the Sacred Congregation of Rites (January 14, 1921) the *Benedictus* must be sung after the elevation ; the rubric in the *Ceremonial of Bishops* must be followed. The rubric in the *Graduale Romanum* has recently been brought into line with this decision in order to avoid any misunderstanding in the future.[1]

Fortescue points out very aptly that "our simple Sanctus tone (for ferias of Advent and Lent, Requiems, at the blessing of Palms) is the only one that continues the melody of the Preface (*op. cit.*, p. 323).

The Canon.

We have now reached the *Canon* of the Mass, which is the most solemn and most mysterious portion of the Holy Sacrifice. The word *Canon* is derived from the Greek, and signifies *rule.* It is, in other words, the formula which must invariably be followed in the consecration of the elements of bread and wine. The term has been in use since the early Middle Ages.

It comprises the prayers which, dating, at least in substance, from the primitive tradition of the Church,

[1] It was certainly the custom in Rome formerly to sing the whole *Sanctus* before the elevation.

precede and follow the consecration of the Eucharist, from the *Te igitur* until the Ekphonesis *per omnia sæcula sæculorum, Amen* which comes before the *Pater noster*. In the Middle Ages it was called the *Canon consecrationis* to distinguish it from the *Canon communionis* which follows it.

The *Canon* has received divers names. St. Augustine calls it "The prayer *par excellence*," because by it is asked the supreme gift, Jesus Christ Himself. It has also been called the *Action*, and the *Mystery of the Most Holy Action*, from the Latin expression *agere causam*, to plead a cause, indeed what is the priest about to do but to plead in the person of Christ the cause of the Universal Church ?

This prayer is very ancient. "The form at present in use existed already, word for word, at the beginning of the seventh century. St. Gregory gave to it its final touch. . . . The author of the *Liber Pontificalis*, which dates from the beginning of the sixth century, speaks of the Canon as fixed in form, and of known content. . . . But we can go still further back, and show conclusively that the prayer to which St. Leo added four words was already in being in the time of Pope Damasus. . . . We find furthermore in a work not much later than the time of Damasus—the *De sacramentis* of the pseudo-Ambrose—large portions of the Roman Canon. . . . We cannot go far wrong in fixing its date as somewhere about 400" (Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 177). We add, in the last place, that the Canon is derived from Apostolic tradition, and from the very heart of Jesus Christ. The words by which the consecration is effected are the fundamental element of the Canon of the Mass. All liturgies contain them and surround them with additions which gradually build up, after such natural re-arrangements as occur

in the course of time, those rites which are special to the Canon.

The venerable age of the Canon of the Mass should inspire us with a very great respect for it. Consider that for so many centuries the Church has used this prayer for the fullness of her worship of God, that worship by which she presents to Him the oblation of the Body and Blood of His Divine Son. The well-known liturgist, Gihr, makes the following remarks on the Canon : " The origin of the Canon, its venerable antiquity and its use, together make of it an ancient and inviolable covenant. If ever a prayer was composed under the special influence and inspiration of the Holy Ghost it was the Canon of the Mass. It is imbued with the spirit of faith, redolent with true piety, full of strength and movement. Its simple nervous language bears the stamp of the Bible and of antiquity ; it makes a striking impression on one who says it, comparable to that produced on the mind by the mysterious half-light of the basilicas in the Eternal City. What a joy it is to be able to repeat at the altar the very same words that for centuries have been used throughout the Church by so many fervent and holy priests in celebrating the Holy Sacrifice. These prayers of the Canon were already sacred in the age of the martyrs and in the funeral chapels of the catacombs. What grandeur and consolation there is in this thought."

We must leave to learned liturgists the most interesting study of its formation and final wording, for such a subject would lead us away from our purpose.

It would take too long to comment in detail on each of these magnificent and profound prayers. We shall confine ourselves to giving an explanation of some of their expressions and accompanying ceremonies.

Primitively, as emerges from what was said above,

this Eucharistic prayer, varying in form in the different liturgies, contained nevertheless certain fundamental ideas common to all. In form it was a magnificent hymn of praise to the Blessed Trinity; to God the Father in the first place to whom both Scripture and Theology ascribe the work of creation. The Eucharistic prayer began by praising the power and goodness of the Creator. It went on to narrate the blessings bestowed upon man, particularly in his redemption, which led up naturally to an account of the Incarnation of the Word and continued with the mysteries of His Passion and especially with that of the institution of the Eucharist. In the consecration which followed the work of the Son was renewed. This work of Jesus Christ in the redemption of the world is continued by the Holy Spirit; He it is who changes the Elect into the likeness of the first-born Son. Therefore it was necessary to invoke Him in the *epiclesis* or solemn invocation, and to beseech Him to send down upon the oblation on the altar His power to make of it the Body and Blood of Christ, the spiritual food of the faithful and the pledge of immortality. The prayer concluded with a magnificent and all-embracing doxology in which the Trinity of Persons is adored in the Unity of Substance. Such was the great prayer extending from the *Preface* to the *Pater*.

The first breach in its unity, as has been pointed out, was caused by the introduction of the *Sanctus* which broke into the Canon and isolated its first part, the Preface. The *Sanctus* obviously belonged to the Preface; the difficulty was to connect it with the account of the Last Supper. There was thus a hiatus between the *Sanctus* and the *Qui pridie* of the Consecration. It was bridged in different ways. Some liturgies reverted to the theme of the Preface, others to that of the *Sanctus*, as did the

Gallican liturgy with its transitional prayer the *Vere sanctus*.[1] Dom Cagin has deduced that the hiatus in question could only have been bridged in the Roman Canon by a prayer on the lines of the *Vere sanctus* of the Gallican Canon. At a later date the gap was still further closed by the prayers of our present Canon—*Te igitur*, *Memento*, *Communicantes*—though they were not all introduced at the same time and have little connexion with the Canon considered as a Eucharistic prayer; rather are they prayers of oblation.

The *Memento* of the Dead with the *Ipsis Domine* and the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* are also a distinct group of prayers which, it seems likely, used to come immediately after the *Memento* of the living. All these prayers were formerly placed before the Preface; they made up what used to be known as the *diptychs* (two tablets hinged and folding together) on which the Romans inscribed the names of the consuls and the chief magistrates; churches and monasteries used them to record the names of benefactors; these lists were read aloud at the offertory after the procession with the offerings; then came the kiss of peace, the Secret prayers, the Preface and the *Sanctus*.

The Preface, a prayer of thanksgiving, together with the *Sanctus*, then what corresponds with the Gallican *Post Sanctus*, *Hanc igitur*, *Quam oblationem*, *Qui pridie* with the account of the last Supper, *Unde et memores*, and probably *Supra quæ* followed by *Supplices*, *Per quem hæc omnia*, down to the *Pater*, corresponding with the Gallican *Post pridie* or *Post secreta*, all seem to have made

[1] The following is one of the forms that it took: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus . . . Vere Sanctus, vere benedictus, Dominus noster, Jesus Christus, qui venit de cælis ut conversaretur in terris; hostia effectus ut nos faceret sacerdotes, ipse qui pridie quam pateretur accepit, etc.*

up a liturgical group of prayers in what seems a logical arrangement. This last prayer might have been that at the fraction which took place at this point. There followed, but not forming part of the Canon, the *Pater* with its embolism or continuation, the *Libera*.

The repetition of *Amen* in the present Canon proves that the prayer is not uninterrupted as was the primitive Eucharistic prayer and that, in consequence, the prayers after which they occur are later additions. A comparison of the four great Western liturgies—Roman, Ambrosian, Gallican, Mozarabic—shows the truth of these statements.

The foregoing is one of the methods by which the formation of the Roman Canon has been explained. We can now begin a more detailed study of this ancient, venerable and sublime prayer.

It cannot be denied that in the second century the celebrant said the Eucharistic prayer aloud. In the fifth century, at the time of Innocent I (401–17), it appears that the contrary custom was the rule in Rome. In the sixth century it was practised in the East since the Emperor Justinian in 565 ordered bishops and priests to "perform the divine offering . . . in such a way as to be heard by the people." There was, then, some opposition. At this period the curtains around the altars of the basilicas, or hanging from the ciborium or canopy, make their appearance and provide obvious proof of the way in which the sacred mysteries were shrouded in secrecy. The practice recalled the High Priest (in the Old Testament) going into the Holy of Holies behind the veil where he spoke alone face to face in the glory of the Lord.

It is certain that in the ninth century the Canon in

the West, and in the Romano-Carolingian liturgy, was said in a low voice. The usual reason given by the old liturgists is the fear that the words of so great a mystery would be debased and that the people would not keep them in sufficient reverence. The holy Council of Trent threatens with excommunication anyone who asserts as worthy of condemnation the rule of the Roman Church by which a part of the Canon and the words of Consecration are said in a low voice. It is very possible that the universal custom, at least in the West, of reciting the Canon in a low voice was gradually introduced as a method of shortening the service. The congregation were saying or singing other prayers ; the *Sanctus* was perhaps over-long ; the priest unable to wait went on with the Canon in a low voice.

The Te Igitur.

We now come to the prayers enclosed between the *Sanctus* and the *Pridie*. They are : *Te igitur*, *Memento*, *Communicantes*, *Hanc igitur*, *Quam oblationem*. These prayers were certainly not all composed at the same time. It is possible that in the fourth century, when the treatise *de Sacramentis* was written, there was only one prayer between the *Sanctus* and the *Pridie*, a prayer in which were merged the *Hanc igitur* and the *Quam oblationem*, for these are both very similar if from the first are omitted the parentheses added by St. Gregory. As we pointed out, the *Te igitur*, the *Memento* with the *Communicantes* were certainly not in their present position in primitive times. But a statement of Innocent I seems to hint that, in the fifth century, the *Memento* and probably the *Communicantes* occupied then their present position : the *Te igitur* connecting up with the *Memento* was added to it. These prayers seem originally to have been prayers

in connexion with the oblation, in the same way as the *Hanc igitur* and the *Quam oblationem*. Now St. Innocent's statement shows that in his time the oblation took place between the *Sanctus* and the following prayers. The *Memento* for the dead together with *Ipsis Domine* and *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* were also placed at the offertory after the *Memento* for the living: hence the use of the word *etiam* (also) to be found in the second *Memento*. These few notions shed abundant light on the part of the Mass that follows the *Sanctus* and continues until the *Qui pridie*. The prayers in this part, in fact, seem to a certain extent repetitions of offertory prayers; this proves that they were added later.

The three prayers, *Te igitur*, *Memento*, *Communicantes*, together make up nowadays one single prayer. Hence the conclusion *Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum* at the end of the *Communicantes*, showing the mediation of the great high-priest Jesus Christ. The *Hanc igitur* and the *Quam oblationem* follow as a final blessing over the oblation now made ready for the transubstantiation.

As children we used to be puzzled by the large picture which we saw suddenly appear at this moment in the Missal —namely, that representing Jesus crucified. The explanation of it is that the Canon of the Mass begins with the word "*Te*." Now, the capital "T" represents a cross, and it appears that our Lord's Cross was in form like a Greek T or *tau*. At an early date delight was taken in ornamenting in the Missals this first letter of the Canon. It was illuminated with splendid miniatures, and there was even placed on the "T" the image of our crucified Lord. Not content with that, but wishing to represent the very scene of the Crucifixion, the illuminators were obliged to enlarge the picture, which finally became independent of the text, occupying a separate page, as in our modern Missals.

In *Ordo Romanus I* after the *Sanctus* the clergy bow low and the Pontiff rises alone and "enters on the Canon." *Surgit Pontifex solus et intrat in canonem.* Mgr. Batiffol notes: "This solemn expression is a way of likening the Canon of the Mass to the sanctuary of the temple into which the high priest entered alone."

The priest raises his hands and eyes towards Heaven, for throughout the whole of the Canon he is going to speak to God the Father. He lowers them immediately after, and bows down in the posture of a suppliant. He then kisses the altar, a fresh sign of respect and love; this is the last time he does so before the precious moment when the consecrated stone will become the throne of our Victim, Jesus Christ. *Ordo Romanus XIV* requires the celebrant to kiss in addition the crucifix that is shown at the beginning of the Canon. Meanwhile he has begun the *Te igitur* and prays with outstretched arms. The Carthusian *Ordinarium* and those of some other religious orders lay down that the priest prays with outstretched arms in order to represent Jesus Christ offering Himself in sacrifice.

A few words now about the *Te igitur*. It has been pointed out that it is very probable that after the *Oremus* of the offertory solemn prayers, like those which we still sing on Good Friday, were recited; in them the Church asks God for all her needs, for her bishops, for princes and for all her children, even the heathen. When the detailed prayers disappeared, in their place after the offertory there may have been added a general and collective prayer to God for all those for whom separate prayers used to be offered. It is possible that this collective prayer was the *Te igitur*. The word *igitur* (therefore) in that case would have connected the prayer with those of the offertory just completed. With the *Te igitur* in its present position

the word may very well refer to the Preface which, it should be noticed, is addressed to God the Father in the same way as the *Te igitur*.

Te igitur, clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum Filium tuum, Dominum nostrum, supplices rogamus, ac petimus uti accepta habeas, et benedicas, hæc ✠ dona, hæc ✠ munera, hæc ✠ sancta sacrificia illibata, in primis quæ tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica : quam pacificare, custodire, adunare, et regere digneris toto orbe terrarum, una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N. et Antistite nostro N. et omnibus orthodoxis, atque catholicæ, et apostolicæ fidei cultoribus.

We, therefore, humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept and bless these ✠ gifts, these ✠ presents, these ✠ holy unspotted sacrifices, which in the first place we offer Thee for Thy holy Catholic Church, to which vouchsafe to grant peace, as also to protect, unite, and govern it throughout the world, together with Thy servant N. our Pope, N. our Bishop, as also all orthodox believers and professors of the Catholic and Apostolic faith.

As a learned liturgist (Thomas Bernard, *Cours de Liturgie Romaine ; La Messe*) says, in the *Te igitur* the priest begs from God an ever-increasing sanctification of the gifts offered, and prays to obtain the *general* fruit accruing from the Sacrifice, which is that reserved for the whole Church. He calls on God through Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord, from whose merits alone our prayers derive their efficacy. The whole prayer of the Canon is thus dependent on the infinite holiness of the Eternal Priest according to the order of Melchisedech.

The priest asks in the first place for the acceptance and sanctification of the offered gifts. Indeed these expressions seem to suppose the consecration, which may be proof that this formula was recited after the celebration of the Mysteries as the beginning of the Roman Intercession. In any case it should be pointed out "that the whole consecration prayer is one thing and should be considered ideally as one act, one moment" (Fortescue, p. 329).

The sign of the Cross is a prayer and a gesture simultaneously; the word *benedicas* evokes both. This sign is made three times, namely at the words *dona*, *munera*, *sacrificia*; for the word *benedicas* is understood with the two last. Some liturgists give another and more natural explanation of this repetition. As may be noticed in the Carthusian *Ordinarium*, or that of St. Vincent at Metz, or of the abbey of St. Arnoul in the same city, the offerings were placed to the right and left of that which was intended for the priest's communion; consequently in blessing the three successively he used three signs of the Cross. We may note, too, that primitively the great number of persons or the abundance of objects to be blessed required this triple blessing which occurs fairly frequently in the liturgy and was given in different directions. Thus at holy Mass several chalices and several hosts were consecrated. Then again on solemn occasions the congregation was grouped all round the altar and so arose the bishop's threefold blessing after Mass. But it must be allowed, in spite of the foregoing, that this sign was often used and was a frequent addition as a mark of honour to the Blessed Trinity.

These offerings are called *gifts* because they are offered voluntarily; *presents*, because they are used for thanksgiving or to ask for graces; *sacrifices*, because they will be consecrated by the words of the priest. But we should not try to be too precise over the meaning of these almost synonymous words; *munera* may often be found in the *Secrets*, *dona* very rarely (e.g. Epiphany, Whit-Monday); *sacrificia* is an equivalent of *munera*. In general, then, these words designate the Eucharistic elements. They all mean the same thing, namely, the host and the chalice containing the wine, but from different points of view.

The priest prays for the whole Church. As we are

aware, the entire Church receives a part of the fruits which flow from every Holy Sacrifice that is celebrated. The faithful, then, who are in a state of grace, participate in the thousands of Masses which are daily offered throughout the world. This is what is called the *general fruit* of the Holy Sacrifice. Let us sometimes think of this, and when we offer to God our worship, our thanksgivings, our requests, and our satisfactions, let us do so united in spirit with all the priests of the whole world.

That is the great intention of the liturgy, prayer for holy Church. "I must keep in mind the Catholic Church spread through East and West," said the bishop Fructuosus (358) on his way to execution. It is the intention of all those noble souls who leave aside their own petty everyday interests and keep in view and are concerned with holy Church, the immaculate bride of Jesus Christ; who would behold her beautiful in the full beauty of God, powerful in action and victorious in her continual struggle. We should broaden our outlook in prayer, be noble and high-principled of soul, seeking above all the glory of God and of His Christ through the Church.

But the great grace which the Church begs is *peace*—"*Quam pacificare . . . digneris*"—that peace which protects, unites, and conducts souls to the haven of salvation, under the guidance of the Supreme Pastor, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the father of the great family of God. That is why, after devotion to the Church, the Mystical Body of Jesus, comes that which is due to the Sovereign Pontiff.

The custom of alluding in the Mass to the reigning Pope is a very ancient one. The omission of his name was, as early as the fifth century, considered a grievous fault; the Councils, e.g. Vaison (529), made its mention a rigorous precept. When the Pope says Mass, he mentions himself, saying, "*With me, Thine unworthy servant.*" The Bishop

of the diocese must next be named. As the Sovereign Pontiff is the centre of unity of all the Churches, so the Bishop is the centre of unity of his whole flock, which with him forms, as it were, a Church within the great Church. Hence it is fitting to pray for him. When he celebrates, he, like the Pope, calls himself, "*Thine unworthy servant.*"

Before the reform of the Missal in the sixteenth century mention was likewise made in the prayer, *Te igitur*, of the reigning Prince. This custom was already in use at the Merovingian period ; it occurs in ninth-century manuscripts and by the tenth century it was the universal rule. It is the King who holds the sword for the defence of the Christian people ; therefore he has a right to our gratitude and prayers. However, this is not done nowadays without a special apostolic indult. Such permission has recently been granted to Belgium. The prayer for the King or the Republic is said in our countries at the end of High Mass on Sundays. The Dominicans have retained the old custom. We shall be doing a very useful thing if we remember them during Mass itself.

Finally, in a general formula, the minister of God mentions all who profess the orthodox faith, that is all those who bear witness to the true Catholic and Apostolic teaching, *et omnibus orthodoxis* (this may be a corruption of *orthodoxæ*), etc. . . . Seventh and eighth century manuscripts contain this formula. Mgr. Batiffol conjectures that what is here meant is "the fathers of the orthodox faith," that is the bishops rather than the faithful, for the word *orthodox* is rarely used by itself.

Memento of the Living.

In the prayer *Te igitur*, the fruit of the Mass was applied in a *general* manner to the Church ; in the prayer called the

Memento the priest *especially* prays for certain designated persons.

There is a double *Memento* or remembrance of the faithful at Mass—that of the living before the Consecration, and that of the dead after the Consecration. The first runs thus :

Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N., et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio ; pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se, suisque omnibus ; pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe salutis, et incolumitatis suæ : tibique reddunt vota sua æterno Deo, vivo et vero.

Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, N. and N., and of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known unto Thee ; for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise for themselves, their families and friends ; for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of their safety and salvation, and who pay their vows to Thee, the eternal, living, and true God.

The *Memento* is closely connected with the *Te igitur*. The commemoration of the living at Mass, as well as that of the dead, is very ancient and seems to be hinted at in a Visigothic document of the fourth century. Its origin is this : after having prayed for the Church, the Pope, the bishops, princes, the rest of the faithful, prayers were offered for those present who had given of their goods to God and to the Church. By making special mention of them the Church showed her gratitude. Mention was also made of those who by presenting their gifts at the offertory expressed their desire that the fruits of the Mass should be specially applied to them. After prayers for the living intercession was made for the Dead, those who had fallen asleep in the communion of this Church. The names of both categories were written on ivory or wooden tablets or separate skins of parchment. The two tablets together formed the *diptychs*. To be named on the diptychs was a sign of communion with the Church.

When the celebrant had said, "*Memento, Domine*— Be mindful, O Lord of Thy servants, men and women," the deacon in a loud voice, from the ambo, read these names to the celebrant and to the assembled congregation. St. Jerome in one of his writings deplores the vanity of some of the faithful, who were wont to offer gifts for the purpose of hearing themselves publicly named by the deacon.

It seems that in the fifth century, perhaps earlier, the diptychs were read at this point at Mass. Before that their position may have varied; it is possible that this reading took place at the offertory, and this seems natural enough. In the twelfth century when the rite of the offering made by the people tended gradually to disappear the celebrant of a High Mass merely said the names in a low voice, as was the custom previously at a Low Mass. There now only remain in the Missal the two letters "N. N.," which stand for *names*. These are to recall to the celebrant the intention of the Mass. It is at this moment the priest prays for the intention of the living, particularly for the one for whom he celebrates the Mass. To this *primary* and *special* intention he may add other *secondary* ones—which is the general practice. But the very special fruit (*specialissimus*) belongs to the priest who celebrates. What fruit we can gather from this privilege! What a privilege it is indeed to be mentioned or thought of by a priest when he is about to accomplish the most awe-inspiring and the most sacred of possible acts. Ah, if only more faith were ours!

The priest continues. He prays for the congregation. Theology teaches us that all who are present have a very special right to the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice, but that those assisting at the altar, as the ministers or the server, have a still greater claim to them. We shall learn one day, perhaps too late, what one more Mass, heard with *faith*

and *devotion*—which are the two conditions named in the *Memento*—would have been worth with regard to eternity.

The celebrant specifies other persons still; in fact, he forgets no one. He has spoken of the congregation in general; he now recommends along with them *all who are dear to them.* For all he begs *redemption, salvation,* and even *bodily health.* He is quite confident of being heard, for he addresses his prayer to the *living and true God.*

These words, *Pro quibus tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt,* at one time gave rise to discussion. It may be said at the outset that the most ancient Sacramentaries, those anterior to the ninth century, do not contain the words *Pro quibus tibi offerimus.* It appears also that the word *vel* (or) left to the priest the choice of which formula he should use. In some Missals, in fact, *vel* was written in red as a rubric; others contained sometimes one formula sometimes the other. Others again had both, and both must be said nowadays. In the eleventh century the author of the *Micrologus,* Bernold of Constance, censures the addition of the words *pro quibus offerimus* to the *Memento* of the living. Indeed the old liturgical forms safeguarded very carefully the theological concept of sacrifice. Now these words are already some indication of a misunderstanding of the real function of true offerers that is the people's at Mass, for they seem to restrict it to an exaggerated degree to the ministers at the altar alone. If, as Dom Cagin holds, the diptychs were read at the offertory, the words *qui tibi offerunt* are some confirmation of this opinion. These offerers are those who have offered the bread and wine at the offertory. The expression *pro quibus tibi offerimus* seems to suggest that it was inserted at the time when the *Te igitur* became part of the priestly prayer of the Canon. These words are also, perhaps, an indication of the period when foundation Masses increased very

greatly in number. The *vel* appears to equate the donors of the foundation with the traditional offerers.

The expression *sacrificium laudis* should be noticed; holy Mass is in the highest sense praise given to the Most High, because at it is offered Jesus Christ, the eternal praise of the Father, the incarnate Word. It is praise which adores the divine Majesty by acknowledging that God is all, that the creature is nothing. The phrase occurs frequently in the Secret prayers, or synonymously as *hostia laudis*—victim or sacrifice of praise. With Jesus we are all together at Mass *victims of praise.*

Pro se suisque omnibus refers to the offerers themselves and "their own": *Pro redemptione animarum suarum* expresses the expiatory end of Mass, *pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suæ* its impetrative end, for all needs of soul and body, more especially here of the body: *tibique reddunt vota sua æterno Deo vivo et vero* is an expression of the eucharistic end, that is, thanksgiving. Thus this comprehensive prayer enunciates in marvellous fashion the four ends of sacrifice: adoration, thanksgiving, intercession and expiation.

The Communicantes.

The priest continues:

Communicantes, et memoriam venerantes, in primis gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi; sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreæ, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomæ, Jacobi, Philippi, Bartholomæi, Matthæi, Simonis et Thaddæi: Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Joannis et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damiani, et omnium Sanctorum

Communicating with, and honouring in the first place, the memory of the ever glorious and Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ; as also of the Blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all Thy

tuorum ; quorum meritis precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuæ muniamur auxilio. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Saints ; by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Above this prayer the Roman Missal inserts the rubric *Infra* (for *intra*) *actionem*, "during the action of the sacrifice." It is a relic of the time when the *Communicantes* was placed elsewhere in the Sacramentaries after the collects and proper prefaces of the days on which it was prescribed. The rubric was an indication that the "proper" *communicantes* was to be inserted in the Canon.

In fact, this prayer has not exactly the same wording throughout the liturgical year. The five greater feasts of Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, and Whit-Sunday, together with their octaves, have respectively their proper *Communicantes*. But the only difference in them is a brief mention of the mystery celebrated. For the convenience of daily use, these five prayers, being seldom wanted, are sometimes not inserted in the body of the *Canon*, but just after the *Proper Prefaces* for the above feasts. It is there that, on the prescribed days, the priest turns to find them. The two words, *Infra actionem*, printed between the *Proper Preface* and *Communicantes* warn the priest that into the *Action* or *Canon* he will have to introduce a special prayer. This same indication, *Infra actionem*, appearing before the ordinary *Communicantes*, serves as a marker and reminds the priest of the change that must be made.

At the end of this prayer the priest says, *Amen*. Formerly the people used to reply. If now the priest says *Amen* it is because the Canon is said in a low voice so that the congregation is prevented from hearing and thus answering in ratification of the priest's prayer.

What is the meaning of this prayer ?

The word *communicantes*, which signifies *participating in one and the same communion*, in order to be rightly understood, should be taken together with the preceding prayer—that is, with the *Memento*, and better still with the *supplices te rogamus ac petimus* of the *Te igitur*. After prayers for the living the dead were formerly prayed for at this point; in the last place were remembered those who were believed to be in heaven, the saints. The sense, then, is: We offer Thee this sacrifice for these and those persons . . . *we who are in communion* by prayer and supplication with the members of the Church Militant and those of the Church Triumphant, the *Holy Apostles and Martyrs*, etc., in a word with the whole Church. There is nothing more Catholic, i.e. universal, more efficacious than such a prayer. This prayer is not anterior to the sixth century and appears to be an addition by Pope Symmachus (498–514).

What does this prayer say?

The priest has recommended to God the whole Church, then some particular persons, and finally all those present. They are all named before the throne of God, those who suffer and are in need as well as those who actually offer to the Lord the great Sacrifice of praise and supplication. And now the sacred minister summons around his altar the Church of Heaven to join in the prayers, joys, and canticles of the Church on earth.

And here it may be pointed out that sacrifice is not offered to the saints mentioned in the *Communicantes*, although memory of them is made in the holy mysteries. The holy Council of Trent gives a clear exposition of Catholic doctrine on this point: "Although the Church is accustomed to celebrate Masses in honour and in memory of the saints she does not teach that sacrifice is offered to them. That is why the priest does not say 'I offer

you this sacrifice, Peter or Paul,' but he gives thanks to God for their victories; he implores their patronage, that they whom we remember here below may vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven."

The sacrifice is offered, then, not to the saints but to God alone, in honour and memory of them. To remember them is indirectly to implore their intercession. The saints see in the sacrifice about to be offered the Sacrifice of the Cross; they recognize in it that which has been for them the sole source of all their grace and glory. They, moreover, honour God, and pray to Him for us. This is true, first of all, of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, also of the Holy Apostles and Martyrs of the primitive Church, and, in fact, of the saints of all ages. They implore for us the *protection of God*, for nothing is more necessary for a man, either for body or for soul.

The list of saints mentioned in the *Communicantes* is closed, and may not be changed without a decree from the Sovereign Pontiff. In the first place is mentioned the "Virgin Mary, Mother of God" under the title that the Council of Ephesus (431) gives to her. It may surprise some not to find in it the name of St. Joseph, the holy spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and the great protector of the Church. He is neither mentioned there, nor in the *Confiteor*, for the following reason. In the Canon of the Roman Church, and this is a proof of the antiquity of this prayer, only martyrs were formerly mentioned, as is the practice to-day; in fact the holy sacrifice was celebrated only over the body or relics of some holy martyr and it was quite natural that he should be mentioned in the place that he was honoured. The twelve martyrs in the *Communicantes* suffered either in Rome or in Italy; local Churches used to insert their own saints in the Canon.

The Church, in the early centuries, had no office for confessors. St. Martin appears to be the first whose feast was celebrated in the West; he is also mentioned in the Gallican liturgy. Manuscripts of the Gelasian Sacramentary inserted: *Dionysii, Rustici et Eleutherii, Hilarii, Martini, Augustini, Gregorii, Hieronymi, Benedicti.* All liturgies commemorate the Blessed Virgin and the holy Apostles; the former is mentioned, says Honorius of Autun, because she gave birth to the Victim of the sacrifice, the latter because they preached Him and sealed their preaching by their death.

We now come to the more solemn prayers which precede the Consecration. They are of a more ardent and tender nature. God is nearer to man. Let us be more recollected and pray more earnestly.

The Hanc igitur.

Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ, sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ, quæsumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias: diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab æterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept this oblation of our servitude, as also of Thy whole family; dispose our days in Thy peace, command us to be preserved from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thy elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Some authors, on the evidence of the *De Sacramentis*, think, it seems with reason, that the two prayers *Hanc igitur* and *Quam oblationem* were formerly but one prayer. Many versions omit the words *Per Christum Dominum nostrum.* And in fact the beginning of the latter, a repetition of the same though in similar words, seems to reveal something of the sort. The first then can be joined to the second, particularly as the words after *diesque nostros*, etc., were added at a later date by St. Gregory the Great. These indications are a great help towards understanding

the meaning of these two prayers which are a summary of the whole intention of the oblation, and present it for the last time in the sight of the Almighty before the great miracle occurs.

It is very possible that the *Hanc igitur*, at least in substance, also goes back to the time of Pope Symmachus.

In ancient Missals the above prayer is preceded by the title *Infra actionem*, as in the case with the *Communicantes*, and for the same reason. The Missal still contains nowadays three proper *Hanc igiturs;* one for Holy Thursday, and one for each of the feasts of Easter and Pentecost with their octaves. They differ very little from the ordinary *Hanc igitur*, only containing slight additions, referring on Maundy Thursday to the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, and on the other two feasts and during their octaves to the newly baptized; as we know, it was formerly on the eves of Easter and Pentecost that adults were solemnly baptized. Variations of the *Hanc igitur* were once more numerous; there were special forms for the Third Sunday in Lent, the anniversary of the day on which one received the priesthood, the dedication of a church, the consecration of a virgin, the anniversary of a birth or of a marriage, and Masses for the dead. All these have now disappeared, leaving only the three *Hanc igiturs* we have mentioned.[1]

While reciting the prayer, the priest holds his hands joined and extended over the chalice and the host. This rite, which is found in fourteenth-century Missals and which became an almost universal practice in the sixteenth century, was sanctioned by St. Pius V in his reform of the Missal. It is, then, of comparatively recent origin. Before the tenth century and afterwards the priest used

[1] There is also a special form of the *Hanc igitur* for the Mass at the consecration of a Bishop.

to hold his hands raised, as during the preceding prayers. In some Churches the priest bent down profoundly, bowing his head as low as the altar, to signify the profound abasement of Jesus Christ in His Passion. The modern rite, it must be admitted, has a still greater signification. Does not the priest appear especially and earnestly to call the attention of the Lord to "this offering—*hanc . . . oblationem*," which he points out to Him? But the conception of sacrifice and the ritual prescriptions of Holy Scripture reveal to us a more profound symbolism. Sinful man ought to lay himself upon the altar, ready to be immolated for the expiation of his crimes. But the God-Man is the only Victim that can appease the Divine wrath. The offering, then, represents, on the one hand, the faithful, on the other, Christ. It was so already in the Old Law. The Jewish priest laid his hand upon the victim to testify that he wished to substitute it for himself, the sacrificer, and for the sinners who offered it up as an expiation or a holocaust. Under the régime of the new priesthood, the priest, acting for himself and for the people whom he represents, lays his hands upon the chalice and the host, as though upon the head of Jesus Christ, who invites us to load Him with our faults, and to recognize that He alone can merit for us pardon for our sins.

We will now say a few words about the prayer itself. Our Roman Missal allows us clearly enough to understand that the words "*oblationem servitutis nostræ*" ("the oblation of our servitude") denote especially the part taken in the offering by the priest and his ministers officiating at the altar, while the words "*cunctæ familiæ tuæ*" (the oblation "of thy whole family") denote principally the part of the faithful.

In this prayer we ask for *peace*. John the Deacon and

St. Bede relate that St. Gregory the Great ordered the addition of these words *Diesque nostros in tua pace* to the preceding sentence at a time of public calamity. In any case we ask for that peace for the world which consists in the interior possession of God by grace. We ask in it "*to be preserved from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thy elect*"; for is not this the final end of our existence, and is it not necessary that Jesus should expiate for us, who are powerless to do so, the sins that hinder us upon our way?

The Quam oblationem.

And now we have come to the last of the prayers preceding the Consecration: the *Quam oblationem*. Some authors take it to be the *epiclesis* of the Roman rite, that is the final solemn intercession asking for the miracle of transubstantiation. This prayer is very similar to a Secret, the last preparation of the material offering for its rôle and state of sacrament. It is a summary of all the preceding offertory prayers and forms their conclusion. The priest here prays that the oblation offered to God may produce all its fruits, and that the great miracle of transubstantiation may be wrought.

Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quæsumus, bene✠dictam, ad✠scriptam, ra✠tam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris, ut nobis Cor✠pus, et San✠guis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui, Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all things to make blessed, approved, ratified, reasonable, and acceptable, that it may be made for us the Body and Blood of Thy most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

We now approach the Consecration. The above prayer is so closely connected with that most holy act that several authors have considered it as even forming part of the rite of consecration. The *De Sacramentis* (fourth century)

quotes it as the beginning of the sacred rite. It is more correct to say that it completes the four preceding ones but at the same time serves as an introduction to the most important and therefore the most solemn act of the Mass. As we said above, it is probable that the *Quam oblationem* was part of the primitive canon.

We notice in the Latin text five crosses between the syllables of as many words. The three first direct the priest to make the sign of salvation over the chalice and host both together, the two last to make it separately over the bread and the wine.

What is the reason of these five signs of the Cross ?

Let us here recall to mind what we have said above concerning the signs of the Cross at Mass ; perhaps we shall there find an explanation. The sign of the Cross is here both prayer and gesture evoked by the word *benedictam* (blessed) ; on account of the similar meaning of the others it accompanies them as well. Perhaps it is made three times for the reason already mentioned above in reference to the *Te igitur*.

The rite is full of mystery. A great favour is asked from God : the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Now the Church begs great favours only through the merits of the Cross of Jesus ; therefore does she make that holy sign over the oblation. Once the sign of the Cross was made at each of the words qualifying the oblation—that is, at *benedictam* (blessed by God), *adscriptam* (approved by Him), *ratam* (ratified, approved and confirmed in Heaven), *rationabilem* (reasonable, because this oblation will soon be Christ Himself, who will deign to associate us with Him as reasonable victims—Rom. xii. 1), *acceptabilem* (acceptable, a thing pleasing to God the Father). . . . For a long time it has

been thought sufficient to make only three signs of the Cross, doubtless in honour of the Blessed Trinity, for each Divine Person co-operates in this great miracle. The signs of the Cross made at the words *Body* and *Blood* are easily intelligible: is not the change of these substances the greatest miracle that can be wrought, and will it not represent in the most vivid manner possible the immolation of Golgotha?

The Church beseeches—and we should note the expression—that this offering may be made *for us* the Body and Blood of God, which means, as Dom Guéranger says, "that they may be placed at our disposal and become our food."

"The simplicity with which we beg for the great miracle of Transubstantiation," says Father Chaignon (*The Priest at the Altar*, p. 216), "is similar to that which makes Holy Scripture so sublime when it records the power of God in the act of Creation: '*Let there be light; and there was light*' (Gen. i. 3), and in the no less wonderful miracle of the Incarnation of the Word in the womb of Mary: '*Be it done to me according to thy word*' (Luke i. 38); '*And the Word was made flesh*' (John i. 14)."

THE CONSECRATION

The Holy Sacrifice.

The priest, in the name of Jesus Christ, whom he represents, has given thanks, *tibi gratias agens;* he has praised the Lord in all the preceding prayers of the Canon and prayed, in short, for the renewal of the sacrifice to which these prayers are an introduction.

We are now prepared for the great visit that the earth is expecting; we have reached the summit of Calvary, and are

about to see rise before our ravished gaze the crucified Jesus. This is also a Mount Thabor we have climbed, where we shall soon behold Jesus, and Him alone. How are we spending our time? "Do you think," says St. John Chrysostom, "that you are still on the earth, or do you not rather believe that you are lifted up to Heaven? O miracle! O goodness! He who is seated on the right hand of the Father will in an instant be in our very hands, about to give Himself to those who wish to receive Him" (*De Sacerd.*, L. iii).

The Consecration is the most solemn moment of the Holy Sacrifice. All that precedes and is going to follow forms a crown around this great act—the greatest of miracles, as St. Thomas Aquinas calls it.

That we may rightly understand the ceremonies of the Consecration we must not forget that at this moment, more than at any other, the principal priest is Jesus Christ. The person of the minister hides from our sight, so to say; he will, without doubt, consecrate, but the principal priest is Jesus. The priest is about to perform the great Act for which by his sacerdotal ordination he has been specially appointed; for he has received the power to consecrate, to offer and to bestow the divine victim; he does these things, however, only by virtue of the inflowing in him of Christ, Priest of His Father. This thought explains the form of consecration for each of the species: the priest here does something more than narrate the Gospel account of the Last Supper; his language is truly effective, and is applied to the matter present on the altar. These sublime mysteries require some explanation at this point.

The heavenly Father has instituted Jesus Christ as our priest, and His good pleasure has designated Him as our sacrifice. See Jesus at the Last Supper; tomorrow He will make the offering of His infinitely precious life to Him

to whom all life belongs, even that of the God-Man ; He will make this offering for the glory of His Father and for our salvation, freely and when He desires, by the power which He has of surrendering this life and of assuming it again ; it is, then, entirely a voluntary offering through His power of *giving* His life, and thence comes His priestly character and His immense merit.

He will make this offering according to the figurative rite of the expiatory sacrifices of the priesthood of Aaron ; namely, by the shedding of blood. Blood expiates for sin ; without this blood there is no remission. That is the unique offering which will effect our eternal redemption, *una oblatione consummavit electos* ("for by one oblation He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"—Heb. x. 14).

Christ is at the Last Supper at which He lavishes His love on His own. He anticipates every betrayal and every suffering. It must not be thought that His abandonment by His people is the cause of our salvation. What does He do ?

With the same love, the same power as on the following day on Calvary, endowed with the power of ordering all things, in advance He now offers to God the Father His sacrifice, His Body and Blood, but this time according to the rite of Melchisedech under the apparent form of a sacrifice of bread and wine, by a rite of oblation which directly represents the oblation accompanied with shedding of blood which He will accomplish on the Cross and which renders Him, even at the Last Supper, a sacrificed victim.

On the Cross the material shedding of Blood, the material separation of the Body from the Blood, shows His immolation (or slaughter), though it is not merely that ; the fact that it is voluntary makes of it at the same time an oblation. At the Last Supper He signified this same

visible, voluntary, priestly offering by immolating Himself by His own hands in a representative sacrifice ; He did this in a *consecratory* action which separates the Body from the Blood *sacramentally*. This *mystical* sacrifice—mystical as distinct not from a real sacrifice but from a sacrifice with shedding of blood—is a figure of the material shedding of the Precious Blood on Calvary and in that way, since it is the will of Christ, it is at the same time a true act of oblation. Although the immolation is figurative it is at the same time a real oblation. For we should not forget, as St. Albert the Great points out, that " this immolation is not a mere representation but a true immolation, that is, the oblation at the hands of the priest of the sacrificed victim. Two things are signified : the sacrificed victim and His offering ; for the immolation properly so-called is the oblation of a victim sacrificed for the worship of God, *immolatio proprie est oblatio occisi ad cultum Dei.* And the oblation itself is not merely a representation but a true *act of offering* " (*In lib. IV Sent.* dist. XIII, 2-23).

Jesus said to His apostles : *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem*—" do this for a commemoration of Me," of Me who am about to suffer, to die, and to rise again for you. By these words He instituted priests for the holy sacrifice of the Mass ; He entrusted to them the Act He had just performed, the priestly act which is this same mystical immolation. At the altar the priest is invested with Christ—the Christ of the Last Supper ; even in the place of Jesus Christ he becomes the minister of the great Act. That is the complete mystery. We must dwell on this a little.

The day after the Last Supper, on Calvary, will take place Christ's voluntary immolation with shedding of blood. But we must not think that this immolation can

be renewed ; by no means, for Christ dies no more. Nor can we suppose that the priestly offering He made can be repeated ; for the sacrifice of Calvary has effected, *obtained eternal redemption* (Heb. ix. 12), *He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified* (*Ibid.* x. 14), for this He did once in offering Himself (*Ibid.* vii. 27). A sacrifice of eternal efficacy cannot be repeated ; it would be an insult to Christ as Victim. This offering cannot be effected afresh by a second oblation parallel to the first, independent of it and adding to its value. For Christ, *hostia perpetua*, since the Cross remains the Victim ever offered ; why then should we seek another ?

But this offering on the Cross may very well be extended by other subordinate offerings, as often as desired. Our consecrated priests will be its ministers, they will act as members of Jesus Christ, in the name and in place of Jesus Christ, the chief priest. These offerings carried out by them will be made only by virtue of the oblation with shedding of blood made first and once for all ; from it they will draw their whole efficacy ; they will be, as it were, incorporated into this one and only offering, adding nothing to it, but making up one with it, without at the same time failing to be true sacrifices and offerings. To offer the oblation of Calvary is to renew it.

The Eucharistic sacrifice of our altars is thus this oblation which, by reason of the enduring efficacy of the oblation of the Cross, is integrated with it.

Since, then, in heaven Christ preserves the character, the state of a Victim, the Church by the very will of Christ —*hoc facite*, He said—and in virtue of these words, by the ministry of priests instituted for this reason, sets on the altar, through an inflowing of the eternal and living priesthood of Jesus, a priestly rite of offering, which represents that of Calvary. Jesus on Calvary shed His

precious Blood which was separated from His Body—that was the sacrifice (immolation) with shedding of blood. He shed it by His own power, of His own will, freely, expressing outwardly the interior sacrifice : that was His *oblation.* On the altar the priest reproduces, acting for Christ, priest and victim, this immolation and this oblation in a rite ; this rite represents the shedding of blood, the separation of Body and Blood ; this rite, in an unbloody manner, makes the oblation of this same immolation ; that is why it constitutes a true awe-inspiring and sacred sacrifice.

In support of this teaching it will be sufficient to recall the words of St. Thomas : " In so far as in this mystery the Passion of Christ is represented it has the character (*ratio*) of a sacrifice " (III, 9, 79, a.7). And elsewhere : " This mystery represents directly the Passion of Our Lord by which He as Victim and priest offered Himself to God on the altar of the Cross. The host offered by the priest is one with that offered by Christ, one by real identity, for it really contains Christ ; so must it be in a representative manner. And that is why when, in the person of Christ, he consecrates and utters the words of consecration *recitative*, recitatively, in the name of Christ lest the host should seem to be other than that which Jesus held in His hands. And that is why he says ' This is *my* Body ' rather than ' This is the Body of Christ.' " How striking is this memorial. The Christ of the Last Supper appears in His priest, the Christ of the Last Supper offering to His Father His Body and Blood according to the rite of Melchisedech.

Lastly, it should be added with St. Thomas that " we should not say that Christ is crucified or done to death daily. None of these terms, which describe the Jews' treatment of Christ, signifies what takes place daily on

the altar. But those terms such as ' offer,' ' sacrifice ' or others like them which express Christ's relation to His Father (on the Cross, that is in His priestly office) are applicable to what is effected every morning."

The reason for this is that " this Host is perpetual. and was offered once by Christ in such a way that it can be offered every day by His members."

We can conclude with the Catechism of the Council of Trent, quoting once again the Secret of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost : " for as often as this memorial sacrifice is celebrated the work of our redemption is wrought." The holy Council furnishes an admirable synthesis of this doctrine, coupling with it the admonition that its teaching should be considered as *vetus*, *absoluta*, *atque omni ex parte perfecta de magno Eucharistiæ mysterio in sancta Catholica Ecclesia fides atque doctrina.* This doctrine, then, is ancient, complete, perfect in every point ; there is thus no need for us, the faithful, to discuss it at any great length.

The following is a résumé of this teaching as it is set forth in the twenty-second session of the holy Council: " Under the old Law by reason of the powerlessness of the Levitical priesthood nothing was brought to perfection. It was necessary, in the wisdom of God, the Father of mercies, that there should arise another priest according to the order of Melchisedech, our Lord Jesus Christ, who should be able to complete, to bring to perfection those who were to be made holy.

" Once only Jesus our God and Lord would offer Himself to God His Father on the altar of the Cross in an oblation involving death so as to effect in that way our eternal redemption. Nevertheless, His priesthood was not to be extinguished by His death, and thus at the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, He

desired to leave to His Church, His beloved Bride, a visible sacrifice, in accordance with the requirements of our nature, whereby might be represented that bloody sacrifice which He was about to accomplish once for all upon the Cross, and the memory thereof remain until the end of time, and its salutary virtue be applied to us for the remission of the sins we daily commit. As priest for ever, therefore, according to the order of Melchisedech (Ps. cix. 4), He offered to God His Father His own Body and Blood under the species of bread and wine, and under the same appearances gave them to eat to His Apostles whom at this moment He instituted priests of the New Testament. By the words 'Do this in memory of Me' He commanded both His Apostles and their successors in the priesthood to offer His Body and His Blood as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.

"He had just celebrated the ancient Pasch, the sacrifice offered by the children of Israel in memory of the exodus; the passage out of Egypt. He instituted a new Pasch, He was Himself this Pasch which the Church should offer by the ministry of her priests in a rite of mystic immolation under visible signs in memory of His passage from this world to His Father on the day when, by the shedding of His Blood, He redeemed us, delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into His kingdom (Col. i. 13) (Cap. i).

"In the divine sacrifice which takes place at Mass there is contained and immolated (offered) in an unbloody manner the same Christ who in a bloody manner offered Himself once on the altar of the Cross.

"It is then really (not only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, a simple memorial of that of the Cross, but also) a propitiatory sacrifice. If we draw nigh to God with a sincere heart and a right faith, with fear and

reverence, contrite and truly penitent, it obtains for us mercy and the assistance of grace in due season. For God, appeased by this offering, grants the grace and gift of repentance, forgives crimes and sins however great.

"The Victim, in fact, is (both on the Cross and on the altar) one and the same (*una eademque hostia*). He who offers to-day by the ministry of His priests is the same who offered Himself once upon the Cross; only the manner of offering is different. And it is the fruits of this offering with the shedding of blood that (the sacrifice of the altar which applies them) enables us to obtain in marvellous profusion.

"And so it is offered, according to the tradition received from the Apostles, not only for the sins of the faithful who are living, for their punishments and satisfactions (the debt of which they have contracted), but also for those who have died in Christ and are not yet entirely cleansed (Cap. ii).

"And it is the wish of the Church that at each of the Masses at which they are present the faithful should communicate not only by desire but by sacramental reception of the Eucharist, in order that they may be endued with the fruits of this most holy sacrifice in greater measure" (Cap. vi).

It only remains for us to marvel and to be thankful and so make ourselves ready to enter into this divine action. What is there on earth, at this solemn moment, that can any longer distract our attention? *Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum. . . .*

The Consecration of the Bread.—The priest wipes his thumbs and index fingers on the corporal, lest they may be moist. The Church reminds him especially how spotless his soul and body ought to be. "The hands which so often touch the Creator of Heaven and earth ought to be

pure, and frequently raised to Heaven," says the *Imitation of Christ* (Book IV, chap. ii).

Then he says :

Qui pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, et elevatis oculis in cœlum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, bene-✠dixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens : Accipite, et manducate ex hoc omnes.

Who the day before He suffered took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up towards Heaven, to Thee, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed it, brake it, and gave it to His disciples, saying : Take and eat ye all of this.

This *Qui pridie* is a historical narrative which at the same time keeps a sense that the intention of the Church renders present and actual. It is addressed to the Father of Jesus Christ, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. The priest, with feeling, recalls in it the rite which the Master Himself observed when He instituted the Holy Mysteries. This rite is not completely given in the Holy Gospels, but has been handed down to us by tradition, and is found in the most ancient Liturgies—namely, those of St. James, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and even in those of Hippolytus, Serapion and the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

With Jesus the priest takes bread into his holy and venerable hands ; he raises his eyes to Heaven, to the Father who receives the Sacrifice ; he gives thanks, he blesses. This sign of the Cross is due to the word *benedixit* which means here primarily praised, gave thanks. It is a gesture. Is it also a prayer ? Mediaeval liturgists, speaking of the consecration, repeat that the sign of the Cross and a form of words (the formula of consecration) cause the nature of the bread and wine to be changed. Obviously the form of words is alone essential ; but this sign of the Cross also appears to have an essential

rôle in this position since it clearly indicates at this solemn moment the connexion between altar and Cross. The holy bread was broken and distributed at this moment at the Last Supper; the Liturgy, however, defers these ceremonies until later. We should notice that the priest here leans upon the altar, which position brings his face nearer to the host, and thus helps him to fix more easily his attention, and to pronounce more fervently the most holy words of consecration. Then, wholly one with Jesus, he says:

HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM. FOR THIS IS MY BODY.

The mystery has been accomplished. . . . *Credo, Domine*—I believe, O Lord. . . .

I believe, My Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou art indeed present on the altar, true God and true Man, with Thy Body, Thy Blood, Thy Soul, and Thy Divinity. I adore Thee, and I say to Thee once more, with the poet of the Eucharist:

"O memoriale mortis Domini,
Panis vivus, vitam præstans homini,
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere,
Et te illi semper dulce sapere."

"O Thou memorial of the Lord's own dying;
O Living bread, to mortals life supplying,
Make Thou my soul henceforth on Thee to live,
And ever a taste of heavenly sweetness give!"

To show their faith, the Greeks, among whom the words of consecration are said aloud, answer three times: "*Amen*—It is so." In ancient times this was the practice among the Latins.

The priest immediately genuflects and adores the Sacred Host, which he then raises so that it may be seen by the attentive and recollected congregation. All the Greek and Latin Churches are convinced that, after the Consecration,

the Angels surround the altar to adore their God. Thus Heaven and earth are blended into one before the Holy of Holies.

All liturgies had an elevation of the Eucharist. The Greek liturgies place it just before the Communion. In the Oriental Church, from the commencement of the Canon, the altar was hidden by curtains, which were drawn back before the Communion to allow the priest to present the Sacred Species for adoration. This elevation is the signal to the congregation to get ready for communion. That is its real meaning. In the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, before the communion, the priest lifts up the holy gifts and says: *Sancta sanctis*—"holy things for holy people." Neither has the Latin Church always observed the existing custom. Even Mabillon acknowledges that he does not know when the elevation was adopted in the Roman Church. Until the twelfth century the only elevation was that which is now called the *Little Elevation*; this is hardly noticeable, and is made immediately before the *Pater Noster*, at the words of the Canon: "*Omnis honor et gloria.*" The heresy of Berengarius, who in the twelfth century dared to doubt the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, gave rise, it is said by some, to the elevation directly after the Consecration. It was introduced, they say, as a solemn protest against the heresiarch, and as an express profession of faith in the Real Presence. But this thesis can no longer be maintained. The elevation at the *Per ipsum* would have sufficed for this. Elevation of the Host immediately after the consecration seems to occur as early as 1100. Hildebert, Bishop of Le Mans, who appeared at first to favour the heresy, may have introduced this rite which was at once adopted by the Carthusians in the lifetime of St. Bruno their founder; the other monastic orders

followed their example. It was soon the universal custom ; Rome took it from the French Church. Innocent III (1198–1216) knew nothing of it ; Honorius III after 1219 supposes it to be practised.[1]

But we reproduce here from the *Collationes Brugenses* (vol. xiii, p. 141) a further explanation given by Father Thurston, S.J. (*cf. The Tablet*, October 19, 1907, "The Lifting of the Host" ; October 26, 1907, "Showing the Host" ; November 2, 1907, "Seeing the Host"). "Some Doctors of the University of Paris, among others the Chancellors Peter the Chanter (†1179) and Petrus Comester, taught that the transubstantiation of the bread only takes place at the same time as that of the wine—that is, when the words of the second consecration have been pronounced. The adversaries of this opinion, which was soon abandoned, began, as a sign of protestation, to adore the Host by genuflecting before it, and to elevate it in such a manner that the people also could see and adore it immediately after the consecration of the bread. Soon the same thing was done after the consecration of the chalice. It was Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris between 1191-1208, who gave the first ordinance for this practice ; but in the first half of the thirteenth century it was adopted and reproduced in many other places, and the custom soon became general." This explanation seems to be the only true one.

The priest's genuflexion before and after the elevation is more recent ; it was not of absolute obligation until the appearance of Pius V's Missal in 1570. Up till that time the general practice was a profound bow.

The elevation also of the chalice may have been in use as early as the twelfth century, but evidence with regard to the matter is scanty (*cf.* Hugh of St. Victor,

[1] *Ordo Romanus XIII* (end of thirteenth century) proves its existence at Rome then.

Speculum Ecclesiæ,[1] chap. vii). However, it was not generally established until later times—that is, until the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Neither the *Ordinary* of the Premonstratensians, nor the Statutes of Cîteaux (1215), nor those of the Guillemite monks (1279), make any mention of this elevation. The Carthusians even nowadays omit it. The reason of this is very simple : the Ancient Statutes of the Order of Cîteaux (confirmed in 1259) order that from the elevation of the Host until after the consecration of the chalice one must remain bowed down ; and such was the ordinary practice of the faithful. This prostration naturally made the raising of the chalice useless, since no one would see it. Moreover, the shape of the old chalice, the cup of which was less deep and wider than ours, rendered this elevation dangerous ; in addition, the Precious Blood could not be seen.

Out of respect for the Real Presence, a rubric orders that an extra candle should be lit at the Elevation, and not be extinguished until after the Communion. This practice still exists in some places. At High Mass it is observed during the double Elevation ; at Ferial and Requiem Masses, in which the Liturgy has more faithfully kept its ancient rites, the torch-bearers do not retire with their candles until after the Communion. This practice dates back to the thirteenth century, to the epoch when the rite of elevating the Lord's Body and Blood had universally spread. The people used to be most eager to see the Sacred Host, sometimes attaching to this sight an exaggerated efficacy. The lights helped them to see it. When the thurifer or subdeacon incenses during the Elevation, he does so from the Epistle side, precisely in order not to hinder the people from seeing (*Collationes Brugenses*, t. xiv, p. 671). This incensing is by no means

[1] Mabillon attributes this work to Robert Paululus (1184).

ancient; but a thirteenth-century Dominican *Ordo* mentions it.

The custom of ringing the big church bell at the Elevation dates from the very introduction of the new rite. In the twelfth century the *Statutes* of the Carthusians, the *Ordinary* of the Premonstratensians, the *Customs* of the Camaldolese, ordered the church bell to be rung at the elevation of the Host. The above-mentioned *Customs* (1105) prescribed that all those who were then in their cells, or in the enclosure of the hermitage, or outside their cells, and heard this bell, should kneel wherever they conveniently could, to pray and adore God as long as the bell rang. The use of the small bell at the altar dates from the same period. At the Elevation the deacon or server of the Mass raises a little the extremity of the chasuble of the celebrant. Nowadays there is hardly any longer a reason for this; but when formerly large chasubles were used which covered the whole body, it was difficult for the celebrant to lift his arms, unless aided by the minister, who facilitated his movements by raising the chasuble.

Let us finally remark that, contrary to the almost universal custom, it is fitting to look at the Sacred Host at the moment of the Elevation. It is for this purpose that the priest lifts it up.[1] As soon as we have seen it, we should modestly bow our heads until the consecration of the chalice.

From this point onwards until the completion of the ablutions the priest keeps joined the four fingers that he has used to touch the Host; in this way he prevents their becoming dirty and also preserves any small particles of the Host that may have adhered to them. Moreover

[1] An indulgence of seven years may be gained by the faithful each time they devoutly look upon the Sacred Host at the moment of the elevation and say "My Lord and my God" (*Preces et pia opera*, n. 107).

it seems more respectful to use these fingers only for touching the Host.

The Consecration of the Wine.—The ceremonies accompanying the consecration of the wine are very like those of the consecration of the bread ; the form of consecration, however, is longer and more explanatory :

Simili modo postquam cœnatum est, accipiens et hunc præclarum calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, item tibi gratias agens, bene ✠ dixit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens : Accipite, et bibite ex eo omnes : HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI, NOVI ET AETERNI TESTAMENTI : MYSTERIUM FIDEI : QUI PRO VOBIS ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.

In like manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, likewise giving Thee thanks, He blessed, and gave to His disciples, saying : Take and drink ye all of this : FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT : THE MYSTERY OF FAITH : WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU, AND FOR MANY TO THE REMISSION OF SINS.

Yes, in the chalice there is the Blood of Jesus, the Blood which has sealed the new and never-ending alliance between God and man. It is, *par excellence*, the Mystery of Faith, that of the Blood of a God poured out for many—that is, for all. This Blood is shed for the remission of our sins. The *hunc præclarum* is Gelasian : *mysterium fidei* appears to be of Gallican origin ; it may have been an exclamation uttered by another and not by the celebrant—perhaps by the deacon.

When the priest has pronounced the sacramental words over the chalice, which he is holding in his hands, he lays it down, and whilst he genuflects to adore the Precious Blood, he says these words of Jesus :

Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis.

As often as ye do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of Me.

He then elevates the chalice, which the faithful ought to look upon and adore. The above words, once addressed to

the Apostles, Christ each day repeats to His priests; they remind them and us of the commemorative though actually real character of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is only since the end of the fifteenth century that the celebrant recites them at this moment. Before then they were said over the chalice, immediately after the words of consecration, or during the elevation, or after it; the custom varied. The *O Salutaris* used to be sung during the Elevation itself, but for a long time now this has been forbidden; the Sacred Congregation of Rites renewed this prohibition, April 26, 1901. Perfect silence must reign during this holy time; the organ, however, may be heard, but the *Ceremonial of Bishops* requires that the pieces played should be more serious and soft (*graviori et dulciori sono*).

After the Consecration.

We have now to study the wonderful prayers which follow the consecration. We shall speak in the first place of the three first: *Unde et memores*, *Supra quæ propitio*, *Supplices te rogamus*. These three prayers are very closely connected, so closely in fact that they form really only one prayer; hence the conclusion of the *Supplices* by *Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum*. As we have already explained, it is probably the end of the ancient Canon. In the course of history these prayers have been the cause, and still are, of dogmatic controversy, at least among the orientals. We purposely refrain from engaging in so delicate a matter which would be outside the scope of this book. It should be recalled, however, that, according to the teaching of the Church and of the Fathers, to the divine words which alone are efficacious and all-powerful to effect the transubstantiation, there are added as an expression of their great power the venerable prayers here mentioned which, receiving from the divine

words as it were an extension and an application of this power, have by reason of their union with the divine words particular force for the purpose of the Mystery and its expression. The same could be said, moreover, of the prayer *Quam oblationem* which comes immediately before the consecration. Holy Mass must be considered as *one whole*. We are obliged, of course, to place before or after the central action—the immolation in which Jesus Christ offers Himself to the Father for us—words and rites which combine to enhance, explain or express it.

This last consideration shows why, after the consecration of the bread and wine, the priest continues to treat and sign with the Cross the Body and Blood of Christ as if they were an ordinary offering like the gifts at the offertory. We have already explained the reason for this. The theological explanation, put forward by Desloge, seems particularly apt: "After, as well as before, the consecration what is present on the altar is an offering . . . it has to be treated as a victim from one end of the action to the other." From this he infers the reason for the signs of the Cross.

Fortescue goes further. He believes that these signs of the Cross "are not merely ways of pointing but are real blessings. As such they again exemplify a common idea. The whole consecration-prayer is one thing, of which the effect is the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. During this prayer we ask continually for that grace; although the prayer takes time to say and God grants what we ask at one instant, not necessarily the last instant of the prayer. So in all rites constantly people still ask for what, presumably, they have already received. Our Baptism and Ordination services furnish obvious parallel examples. The Epiklesis is surely also to be explained in this way.

We may consider these later demands for a blessing on the oblata as dramatic postponements, since the celebrant cannot express everything in one instant. It is still better to conceive the Canon as one prayer. It takes place no doubt at the words of institution, but it is the effect of the whole prayer. There is no sequence of time with God. He changes the bread and wine *intuitu totius orationis.*"

Jesus Christ is now really present on the altar. More than ever it is He who recites the prayers that follow by the mouth of His representative. What, then, must be their efficacy? We can now consider the three first prayers.

First as to their importance. Few prayers are more sacred; we mentioned above their venerable antiquity. They can never be studied too carefully for they constitute the very expression of our great oblation. Indeed the first is the prayer of oblation, the second recommends to God the oblation on the altar reminding Him of the sacrifices with which, under the old Law, He was deigned to be pleased, and the third is a request that the divine Victim may be accepted. We may consider these prayers as the gradual process of presentation of the oblation and at the same time use them as acts of faith, hope and love. The first acknowledges here present the reality of the Body and Blood of Him who redeemed us; the second regards this oblation as an intercession which unfailingly draws down upon us God's blessing, and the third unites us to God by bearing us with this oblation to the Father.

The Unde et Memores.

The words which follow the Consecration of the Chalice —"As often as ye do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of Me"—form the subject of a commentary

which in the Greek liturgy is called *Anamnesis*, a Greek word meaning remembrance, reminder, commemoration. It is the *Unde et memores* of the Roman Mass.

The *Unde et memores* is to be found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. In it mention is made of the Passion; this it was that led some priests in the twelfth century to hold their arms extended in the form of a cross at this point, which is still the practice with the Carthusians, Carmelites, Dominicans[1] and Franciscans.[2] This custom has *never* been introduced at Rome. The priest holds his hands raised, which is a natural attitude for prayer, and one of great antiquity.

Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, ejusdem Christi Filii tui Domini nostri tam beatæ Passionis, necnon et ab inferis Resurrectionis, sed et in cœlos gloriosæ Ascensionis, offerimus præclaræ Majestati tuæ de tuis donis, ac datis, Hostiam ✠ puram, Hostiam ✠ sanctam, Hostiam ✠ immaculatam, Panem ✠ sanctum vitæ æternæ, et Calicem ✠ salutis perpetuæ.

Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed Passion of the same Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, His Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension into Heaven, offer unto Thy most excellent Majesty, of Thy gifts and presents bestowed upon us, a pure Host, a holy Host, an unspotted Host, the holy Bread of eternal life, and Chalice of everlasting salvation.

The priest, united with the faithful, acknowledges in this prayer the sovereign dominion of God over all things, and

[1] The Dominican rubrics do not mention the extension of the arms in the form of a Cross. They say: *Extendat brachia plus solito, mediocriter tamen.*

[2] Fr. Augustine Schoutens has been kind enough to point out the rubric in the new *Cæremoniale Romano—seraphicum Ordinis Fratrum minorum* (1908) at this point with reference to the server at Low Mass: "The server returns to his place (after the elevation) and kneeling there, his arms extended in the form of a cross, remains until the *Pater noster*, reciting secretly meanwhile six *Pater*, *Ave* and *Gloria*." A note adds "according to the custom of the Order." Fr. Schoutens reminds me that three *Ceremonialia* of different Franciscan provinces (of the seventeenth century) contain rubrics: "He prays crosswise," "he prays his arms extended in the form of a cross."

in particular over these gifts that have been offered and transformed.

The conjunction *unde* (wherefore) shows the close and immediate connexion there is between this prayer and the preceding one : Jesus Christ ordered His priests to offer to the Divine Majesty the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, *wherefore* they obey Him. *We Thy servants* are the ministers at the altar.

Thy holy people, that is *Thy faithful people*, who constitute the Church of God—a holy people by vocation, duty and belief ; people—those present at this Sacrifice, or everywhere—sharing in its general fruit by reason of the unity of the Church.

Notice, too, the expression *de tuis donis ac datis*. . . . " We offer . . . of Thy gifts and presents." Variant forms are to be found, as *dona ex tuis* or *tua ex tuis* and other analagous forms. It is an idea familiar in scripture and in all liturgies which can be traced back to early times. It is the constant theme of the Secret prayers in the Leonine Sacramentary : these gifts which we offer belong to God and return to Him as to their Author. He has given us Jesus Christ whom we give back to Him ; in that is summed up the whole of religion. *Donis* means perhaps the gifts received from God and *datis* what we give back to Him. The Sacrifice is offered, says the prayer, in memory of the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Jesus Christ. This last mystery would seem to require mention of Pentecost. Fortescue writes : " I do not find the coming of the Holy Ghost mentioned explicitly in any liturgy ; but the place it normally would find here no doubt accounts for the reference to the Holy Ghost that introduces the Epiklesis and accounts for its place as a sequel to the *Anamnesis* in nearly all rites " (*op. cit.*, p. 346). We refer to this below. Arnobius the

Younger (first half of the fifth century) mentions the birth of Our Lord as named in the Canon but it no longer forms part of the Roman Anamnesis. "In the Roman Canon the Anamnesis is a recapitulation of all the mysteries enumerated, in ancient times at least, in the Preface; and the nativity was included" (Cabrol). According to Dom Morin, one of the most learned liturgists of our time, this mention of the nativity represents the most ancient form of the Canon as it was faithfully preserved in many local churches for long after Rome had modified it. In addition it seems to us the theological complement of the Mass. Furthermore, holy Mass celebrates and makes living future mysteries. The Greeks after mentioning Our Lord's ascension into heaven and His sitting at the right hand of God the Father add a reference to His second coming in glory. And since holy Mass is the mystery of eternal life prepared, secured and perfected by its means, it must be added that it is an epitome of the whole economy of salvation. Such a thought should give us an exalted idea of the holy Sacrifice. It means that in this way the Eucharist is indeed an epitome of the mysteries of the Son of God. Jesus offers Himself on the altar in each of these mysteries as He offered Himself here below, as He offers Himself mystically and gloriously in heaven. The whole sacrifice sets forth these mysteries and applies to souls their untold merits, especially those of the mystery which is celebrated at a particular season or day of the liturgical year. We have already explained above how this teaching is to be understood. For everyone admits that the holy Sacrifice is offered more especially in memory of the blessed Passion whose great effect and efficacy are so vividly shown forth in this holy Sacrifice. Moreover mention of this mystery entails the mention also of the different phases of the life of Jesus, those that were

a preparation for it, those that were its consequences; the Passion implies the whole dogma of the Incarnate Word and of the Redemption.

That is not all. The Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord are commemorated for a special reason. There are four solemn moments in the sacrifice: the immolation, the oblation, the divine acceptance, the communion at God's table. The immolation has taken place; the oblation was divinely, sublimely expressed at the same time. The acceptance of the divine Victim, offered on Calvary, was declared and made manifest at dawn on the first Easter morning and in the glory of Our Lord's Ascension. Just like the symbolic smoke from the burnt offering under the Old Law, the sacred Victim goes up as a sweet-smelling savour, in solemn homage to the Father. "I arose and am still with thee," says the Easter Introit. It is the union of Jesus with His Father, and in a short while Eucharistic communion will give us our share in this union. Does this make the meaning of this prayer clear?

Dominic Soto, O.P., a well-known theologian of the sixteenth century, explains the words accompanied by signs of the Cross in this way: "Before the consecration we ask that the matter of the sacrifice be blessed, approved and accepted; so after the consecration this consecrated Host which is Christ is offered as a *pure victim*, unlike the sacrifices of the Gentiles which were impure and corrupt; as a *holy Victim* unlike the offerings of the Old Law which were not holy, in the sense that they did not sanctify souls as does our Victim who takes away the sins of the world: and so there is added *as a spotless victim* since Christ was the innocent sinless Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, that is, who makes men holy. This Host, therefore, is both pure and purify-

ing, holy and sanctifying, without spot and cleansing. The following words 'the holy Bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation' are a definition and explanation of this Host: for just as the priests of the Old Law partook of the sacrifice which was offered in order to sustain their temporal life so Christians by eating and drinking of this sacrifice obtain spiritual and consequently eternal life." The Host is *pure* because it was conceived of the Holy Spirit; *holy* because it is united personally to the Word; *immaculate* because, freed from mortality, it has passed to the state of glorification.

The *Anamnesis* in the Eastern liturgies concludes with an invocation called the *Epiklesis* (from a Greek verb meaning *call down, invoke*) in which occurs generally a prayer asking the Holy Spirit or the Word to come and change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; as if the words of consecration of the bread and wine were not sufficiently complete to effect or to affirm the mystery. Some authorities, Hoppe among them, have supposed that the two following prayers *Supra quæ propitio* and *Supplices te rogamus* were similar to the Eastern *Epiklesis*. And in fact their position in the Roman Canon would seem to lend colour to this theory.

We repeat that we have no intention of discussing here this historical and theological question. At the same time to avoid passing it over completely we quote and adopt as our own the following conclusion reached by the liturgist Varaine: "It is an undoubted truth and part of the belief of the Catholic Church that the words of Eucharistic institution alone are the operative words of consecration and that they effect it completely." Moreover the existence of the Epiklesis in the Greek liturgies may be reconciled with belief in the exclusive consecratory power of the words "This is My Body, etc. . . ."

The view is held by some that the *Supplices* is a kind of contracted or "implied" Epiklesis, but we consider with Varaine that a careful examination of the text will not bear out such a view. It would be difficult, in fact, to discover in this "implied" Epiklesis any certain reference to the Holy Spirit or the Word. It would be easy to show by detailed comparison that the *Supplices* of the Roman Canon is closely connected in ideas and form with certain prayers of the Greek liturgy which are entirely unrelated with the Epiklesis. The Roman Canon, therefore, contains no Epiklesis. The reasons urged as a proof that it did so do not appear to be based on sound arguments.

In dealing with this question Mgr. Batiffol (referring to Dom Paul Cagin's theory previously mentioned) writes: "Dom Cagin's reconstruction of the Roman Canon as identical with the Gallican Canon has in its favour that it brings out quite clearly the perfect unity and the undisjointed character of the Canon or Eucharist.

"In spite of what St. Isidore says in the seventh century there is no Epiklesis over this Eucharist; there is a single anaphora, a single preface as we should say nowadays, but a preface that extends to the very limits of the Canon . . . the whole prayer is a thanksgiving . . . an indivisible unity with its successive elements co-ordinated and making up this unity." In this connexion Fortescue's remarks on the signs of the Cross are relevant. In these circumstances the Epiklesis is merely a subordinate feature and cannot be imposed on the harmonious arrangement of the whole prayer.

As a general conclusion it can be said that the Epiklesis is not a primitive and universal feature of the liturgy, and that it was not introduced into the Canon of the Greek liturgy by the Church as an essential element. That is the verdict of history; it is neither obvious nor infallible,

of course, but based on an unbiased study of patristic and liturgical texts it appears to be the most probable and satisfying conclusion.

Finally the whole question may thus be summarized: some liturgists consider that the *Supplices* is the Roman Epiklesis. It is sufficient to say to this that the idea of the intervention of the Holy Spirit for the miracle of the consecration is entirely outside the scope of the Roman Canon, providing its whole shape is considered and it is interpreted in the light of what it contains.

The Supra quæ.

The priest continues:

Supra quæ propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris, et accepta habere, sicuti accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel, et sacrificium Patriarchæ nostri Abrahæ, et quod tibi obtulit summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam.

Upon which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as Thou wast graciously pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy high priest Melchisedech offered to Thee, a holy sacrifice, an unspotted victim.

This prayer, like the *Supplices te rogamus* which follows it, is to be found in the *De Sacramentis*, at least substantially (Lib. iv, c. 6—P.L., XVI, 464).

The priest here prays that God the Father may be pleased to accept our oblation. Three very celebrated sacrifices of the Old Testament are mentioned in this prayer: those of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech, the King of Salem. Each of them was a figure or type of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Abel, offering the best of his flock and the first of its fruits, represents Jesus Christ, "*the first-born among His brethren*" (Rom. viii. 29), killed by Cain, that is, by sinners. Abraham, sacrificing his only son Isaac, further recalls the Sacrifice of Calvary, when

Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, was put to death for guilty humanity. The sacrifice of Melchisedech is the most mysterious—first on account of the matter of the offering—"*he offered bread and wine*" (Gen. xiv. 18)—and secondly, owing to the person of the priest, whom Holy Scripture describes as "*King of Peace, without father or mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God, a Priest for ever*" (Heb. vii. 3). The words *Sanctum Sacrificium* (Holy Sacrifice), *Immaculatam Hostiam* (unspotted Victim), were added by St. Leo I; they suitably refer to Christ present under the sacred species. The truth of this may be seen in the fact that formerly in some churches, for the reason already mentioned, the oblation was signed with the Cross at these words. But some authors assert that these words apply to Melchisedech's sacrifice and this is, perhaps, the reason why these signs of the Cross no longer appear at this point. They depend grammatically upon the words *accepta habere*; the phrase must then be understood in the following sense: "*Vouchsafe . . . to accept them . . . this Holy Sacrifice and unspotted Victim.*" The remainder, from *sicuti* down to *Melchisedech*, is a kind of parenthesis; the Liturgy has thus a sense which is *a fortiori* much more beautiful and profound: "Since, Lord, Thou hast not disdained the figures of ancient times, *how much more readily* wilt Thou accept the Sacrifice of the Law of Grace" (*cf.* Dom Guéranger).

The Supplices te rogamus.

The priest continues:

Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus: jube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinæ majestatis tuæ: ut quot-

We most humbly beseech Thee, Almighty God, to command these things to be carried by the hands of Thy holy Angel to Thine altar on high, in the

quot ex hæc altaris participatione sacrosanctum Filii tui Cor ✠pus et San ✠guinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione cœlesti et gratia repleamur. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

sight of Thy Divine Majesty, that as many as shall partake of the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son at this altar, may be filled with every heavenly grace and blessing. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer, like the preceding one, is of the greatest antiquity. It is so deep in meaning that even the Holy Fathers of the Church have not attempted to explain it. "The human mind," says Innocent III, "can hardly penetrate its sense."

The present prayer connects two different altars—that on earth, on which lie the gifts which have been offered and consecrated, and the mystical altar of heaven, or, as St. John calls it, "*the golden altar before the throne of God*" (Apoc. viii. 3), whereon are offered the merits of the Redeemer and the prayers of the faithful.

What is this sublime altar? It is God Himself inasmuch as He receives and accepts the Sacrifice of Calvary which is commemorated and reproduced at Mass. The Sacrifice of the Cross was accepted by God who ratified the definitive reconciliation between earth and heaven. "The divine tokens of the definitive reconciliation which show for ever the completeness of the work of the Cross are the Resurrection and Ascension of Our Saviour—the triumphal entry of the conqueror into the temple of His glory and His definitive admission to the right hand of the Father" (Dom Beaudouin).

Christian language asserts the continuance of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Holy of Holies of heaven, the eternal oblation before the majesty of God. Mass in heaven! What is the meaning of that? "This permanence of the heavenly sacrifice should be explained," continues Dom Beaudouin, "by the glorified state of the divine Victim,

a state which of its very nature ceaselessly proclaims the divine acceptance and prolongs in heaven, thus, the eternal consummation of the Sacrifice of the Cross which was inaugurated by the glorious mysteries of His heavenly life," a sacrifice which, prolonged on earth in holy Mass, receives continually authentic tokens of divine acceptance.

Some liturgists explain the words of the *Supplices* as follows :

Mention is made of the holy Angel who bears, presents on high the sacred gifts (*hæc*) from the earthly altar. He does not bear the Body of Christ which never ceases to be on high in heaven, but the oblation which we make of it here below. It means simply that the Angel, the angels, are, like God Himself, present at our sacrifice ; that they present to Him with the prayers of the faithful the merits of Jesus the Redeemer, and of the ever-continuing mystery of redemption which cries aloud to God the Father from all the glorious wounds of His well-beloved Son.

Some authors call the *altar on high* the glorified Humanity of Jesus inasmuch as the glory which radiates from His transfigured Humanity is like a hymn of praise and prayer which ever goes up from the altar to heaven reminding the Father of all the merits of the Cross of which this glory is the eternal ratification. In this sense He is *semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis*, which we may interpret freely as : " His glorified life itself is the prayer of His eternal sacrifice."

Mention is also made of the *holy Angel* who carries the sacred gifts from our altar below and presents them on high. Who is this Angel ? He is generally taken to be Jesus Christ Himself, the Angel *par excellence*, the Messenger of God (for *angel* signifies a *messenger*), He who is called the " *Angel of Great Counsel* " in the Introit of the third Mass for Christmas day. It is hardly likely. A learned

German liturgist, Aloys Schmid, has collected together the many different interpretations of *sancti Angeli* to be found in the whole course of liturgical history. They agree in general that this Angel does not mean the Holy Spirit. Moreover in some Eastern liturgies, at another point of the Mass, there occurs a phrase not unlike that we are considering but with a characteristic variation. We find in them "by the ministry of the angels" or "by the ministry of the arch-angelical liturgy." The treatise *De Sacramentis*, quoted above, contains this form: *Per manus angelorum tuorum*—"By the hands (or the ministry) of Thy angels." The comparison of these different versions brings out the meaning of our *Supplices*. In the *holy Angel*, then, may be seen the Angel of prayer spoken of in the Apocalypse. St. John describes him thus: "And another Angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the Angel" (Apoc. viii. 3–4). The expression *sancti Angeli, in sublime altare* is an obvious allusion to the golden altar and the Angel's office. It recalls the passage in Tertullian where he administers a severe reproof to the faithful who remained sitting during the prayer. He calls this attitude extremely irreverent for, he says, "we are in the presence of God and the Angel of Prayer, *Angelo adhuc orationis adstante*."

Nevertheless, if we may humbly express our own opinion, after considerable reflexion on the matter, we believe that the Angel of God is here the Holy Spirit, as some liturgical theologians assert. "(Christ) through the Holy Ghost, offered Himself without spot to God . . ." (Heb. ix. 14) says the Apostle. The altar on high is the Eternal

Word who bears the sacred Humanity, and that by reason of His Person and of His divine subsistence. The *Divine Majesty* is the Father Himself to whom, by desire, with Jesus and in Him we are carried. What wonders are these; we are now on the very summit of the mountain of God.

Grancolas and many others assert that they have seen Missals in which after the words *Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus* this rubric occurs in red characters: *Hic orat quodcumque voluerit:* "Here the priest prays for his own intentions." It may be inferred from this, it seems, that the words *Hæc perferri*—"that these things may be carried"—should be understood also of the celebrant's prayers, which corroborates, it will be acknowledged, our interpretation of the words *sancti Angeli.*

What then does the prayer *Supplices* ask of God?

"In order to understand the essence of this prayer," says Bossuet in his *Explanation of the Prayers of the Mass*, "and to clear up all the difficulties connected with it, we must ever bear in mind that *these things* (*haec*) of which it speaks are truly the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, that with Our Lord's Body and Blood are included ourselves, along with our desires and prayers, and that all taken together compose one and the same oblation which we desire to render in every respect pleasing to God, not only as far as Jesus Christ is concerned, who is offered, but also as regards those who offer Him and with Him themselves."

As soon as the priest begins this prayer he bows down profoundly; here more than elsewhere he retains the humble attitude of a suppliant. He leans his joined hands against the altar, making himself, as it were, but one with the Divine Victim. Anciently, it was the custom in many churches not to lean against the altar, but to cross the arms upon the breast, as the Carthusians and Dominicans do even to this day, and as was the practice for some time

at Rome. At the word *quotquot*, when the priest mentions the altar on earth, he kisses it to show thereby that he, and those who are soon to communicate, ask by virtue of this union with Christ, and of this participation in His Sacrifice, "*to be filled with every heavenly grace and blessing*" (*cf.* Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, t. xiii, p. 513). In certain churches, in order to show this participation even more strongly, the altar was kissed in several places ; such was the practice at Verdun for example and Vienne in Dauphiné. After what has been said above concerning the sign of the Cross at Mass the reason for those that occur in this prayer will be clear enough.

In the last place it should be noticed that, as we have suggested, this prayer is for the faithful who are to communicate : its wording makes this quite obvious. For what, indeed, will unite more strongly the oblation in which God is offered and us with Him ? What will raise it up, above all complete it, if not our Eucharistic communion with Christ, the Priest and Victim of His own Sacrifice ? It is impossible for the Father of Heaven not to accept us when He beholds us indissolubly united to His Son through His Flesh and Blood, and not to fill us with every heavenly grace and blessing. For other reasons assistance at Mass should always be accompanied by Holy Communion ; but it seems to us that the prospect of obtaining the fruit of this prayer should alone urge us never to miss.

O admirable prayer, be often on our lips at that holy hour when we can contemplate with our eyes Him through whom alone thou must pass upon thy way to Heaven !

Commemoration of the Dead.

Then the priest begins the *Memento* or *Commemoration of the Dead :*

Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N., qui nos præcesserunt cum signo fidei et dormiunt in somno pacis.

Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, N. and N., who are gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace.

We have already said something of the *Memento* for the Dead in treating the *Memento* for the living. Neither the Gelasian nor the Gregorian Sacramentary mentions this prayer. Many manuscripts right up to the eleventh century know nothing of it. Mgr. Batiffol suggests that the *Memento* for the Dead may have occurred only in private Masses and not on Sundays; the Papal Mass of the eighth century does not appear to include it.

Originally it occurred at a different point in the Mass. The *etiam* (also) obviously does not join this prayer with the preceding one with which it has no connexion; probably it linked it with the *Memento* for the living and the *Communicantes*. In fact at the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, as we shall see, the Church prays again for the living and commemorates the saints in heaven. Such repetitions in the Mass should not surprise us. In this place it is only a supplement, as it were, adding what was omitted before the Consecration.

Whilst saying this prayer, the priest raises and joins his hands before his breast, casts down his eyes, fixing them on the Sacred Host, and prays for the departed. Until the sixteenth century it appears that names were mentioned at the letters N.N.

The practice of praying for the dead at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is found in the oldest Liturgies. Even in the Old Law the Jews were pious towards their dead. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in the fourth century, says: "We pray for all of our Communion who have departed from this world, believing that their souls receive a very great relief from the prayers offered for them in the holy and redoubtable

Sacrifice of the Altar." These words sufficiently show, as also does the *Memento*, which are the dead for whom the priest prays at the altar. They are not the saints in heaven, for, far from needing our prayers, they benefit us by theirs. They are not the damned, who have lost, alas, all hope of redemption. The Church therefore prays here only for the souls in Purgatory—namely, for those who have died in the *Faith*, who have practised its good works, and who *sleep the sleep of peace*—that is, in communion with the Church. She beseeches God to be mindful of these souls, in other words, to succour them—in the first place, especially those for whom the priest has the explicit intention of praying, and then all the faithful departed in general. There is not celebrated, then, a single Mass in the whole world in which prayer is not made for every Christian who has departed this life in a state of grace, and who is still expiating his sins in Purgatory. Holy Church is a mother who helps by her suffrages all who belong to her. She forgets no one even when she prays for those whom she desires particularly to help.

Ipsis, Domine, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

To these, O Lord, and all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The place here spoken of is that promised to the just (Wisd. iv. 7), where "*neither mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more*" (Apoc. xxi. 4).

We also ask, O Lord, admittance to this place *for ourselves, sinners though we are* (*nobis peccatoribus*), with which words we commence the fifth prayer after the Consecration.

The vision of celestial rest (*locum . . . pacis*) has deeply moved the priest. He has just previously been preoccupied with the Church Suffering, now he returns to

the Church Militant, to which he belongs. But this earthly life is full of miseries, temptations, and falls, hence his humble language: "*Not in consideration of our merit, but of Thine own gratuitous pardon, deign to admit us into the society of Thine elect.*"

The Nobis quoque peccatoribus.

Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris, cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus: cum Joanne, Stephano, Matthia, Barnaba, Ignatio, Alexandro, Marcellino, Petro, Felicitate, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, Agnete, Cæcilia, Anastasia, et omnibus Sanctis tuis: intra quorum nos consortium, non æstimator meriti, sed veniæ, quæsumus, largitor admitte.

And to us sinners, Thy Servants, hoping in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and Martyrs; with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, Anastasia, and with all Thy Saints; into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not in consideration of our merit, but of Thine own gratuitous pardon.

We shall hardly be mistaken in assigning the introduction of the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* into the liturgy of the Mass to the pontificate of Pope Symmachus (498–514), who had a great devotion to the martyrs.

The list of saints here enumerated is a counterpart to that given before the Consecration. No saint is mentioned a second time. Once again are mentioned only those who were martyrs for Jesus, those who died or were held in particular veneration at Rome, and in whose honour a basilica is there dedicated. In the first list St. John the Evangelist was named; here it is John the Baptist, the precursor. Following him is a glorious band of fourteen other confessors of the faith, seven men and seven women; a deacon: St. Stephen; the two additional apostles: St. Matthias and St. Barnabas; a bishop: St. Ignatius of Antioch, prince of the Eastern Church; a pope: St.

Alexander; a priest: St. Marcellinus, accompanied by St. Peter an exorcist, both of them martyrs *ad duas lauros;* married women saints: Perpetua and Felicity; virgin saints: Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, Anastasia. The names of these virgins were added by St. Gregory the Great. All form a circle round the sacred table.

Throughout the whole *Canon* the words *nobis quoque peccatoribus* are the only ones which, being said in a moderately loud voice, break the uniformity of the silence. The priest in this impressive way claims the attention of the faithful. Striking his breast at the same time, he with his assistants forcibly recognizes and declares himself a sinner.

This action is suggested, as it is in the *Confiteor*, by the idea of contrition. Some authors consider that this prayer was intended particularly for the ministers of the altar.

Formerly the celebrant raised his voice for another reason which no longer exists. It is to this that the *Ordo Romanus I* appears to allude, and in an old Roman sacramentary of the abbey of Bec there is a similar rubric which prescribes that "when the subdeacons, who have remained bowing low behind the altar since the *Sanctus*, hear the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* they rise and prepare the vessels" (for the communion). Several ancient Missals mention a similar ceremony. The *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* was then a signal.

The Per quem hæc omnia.

After the words *largitor admitte* of the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, formerly a prayer was offered for the fruits of the earth—wheat, wine and oil, etc. At all events this hypothesis provides some explanation of the liturgical anomaly of the *Per quem hæc omnia* which follows. It ended with the words:

Per Christum Dominum nostrum.	Through Christ our Lord.

To it was added the prayer:

Per quem hæc omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, sancti ✠ ficas, vivi ✠ ficas, bene ✠ dicis, et præstas nobis.	By whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us all these good things.

That there is no *Amen* to this conclusion is due, no doubt, to the formula which follows—a marvellous expansion of the idea of *Per Christum Dominum nostrum*, like the one that occurs in the Preface.

The prayer itself disappeared, but traces of it survived in the custom which once existed of blessing food on certain days at this particular point in the Mass. At Easter and Pentecost a beverage made of water, milk, and honey used to be blessed for the Catechumens; on Easter day, a lamb; on Ascension day, new beans; on the Feast of St. Sixtus, new grapes; and on Maundy Thursday the oil of the sick, which is still blessed on this day. Concerning blessings during Mass, Cardinal Bona makes a remark that may be usefully considered in these days when, to the great detriment of that true devotion which is founded on theology, liturgical piety has almost disappeared. "The religious sense of our ancestors was such that they required all sacred and ecclesiastical ceremonies, the administration of the sacraments and all blessings to take place at the holy Sacrifice, because they understood how the holy Eucharist perfected and completed them. Whether it was the signing of a treaty, a reconciliation, the offering of some gift to God, the excommunication of a heretic, the proclamation of the feasts of saints or other solemnities, the imposition of a fast; were the litanies to be said, penitents to be reconciled, virgins to be consecrated, clerics to be ordained,

bishops to be consecrated, kings to be crowned or the holy chrism to be made; all such things, Christians of earlier ages believed, could not be properly accomplished without the celebration of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Gradually lukewarmness and slackness separated many of these things from the Mass for fear that the Sacrifice should take too long; even Communion was postponed until after Mass thus causing great confusion in the rite since many of the prayers said by the priest after the Communion refer to the communicants." Nevertheless, some of these rites still take place at Mass, ordinations, for example, the consecration of bishops, the blessing of abbots and abbesses, the consecration of virgins, coronations, monastic profession, and the nuptial blessing; lastly, the consecration of the chrism and the holy oils on Maundy Thursday. It is hardly necessary to add that these blessings do not take place at this point of the Mass except the blessing of the oil of the sick.

The foregoing explains the three signs of the Cross in this prayer which were formerly made to the left, to the centre and to the right; they referred to the different foodstuffs—in considerable quantity—to be blessed at this point. The prayer remained after the blessing had fallen into disuse, and the signs were transferred to the chalice and host.

It will be asked, perhaps, why when this blessing disappeared the liturgy kept the prayer referring to it. The reason is that all churches did not simultaneously cease blessing these offerings at this point in the Mass; it seems, too, that they were not blessed at all Masses; moreover the oil of the sick is still so blessed every year. It may be added that "there is no doubt that the formula *Per quem hæc omnia* was originally preceded by a prayer for the fruits of the earth, even when the blessing did

not take place" (*Cf.* Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, Eng. trans., p. 183). Consequently the formula has been maintained. Then, too, we may notice in passing that the Church does not easily change her established formulas.

Buchwald thinks that before the *Per quem hæc omnia* there was another prayer in the following terms: *Benedic, Domine, has creaturas panis et vini in nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem hæc omnia*, etc. . . . In his view this formula was the Epiklesis of the Logos (or the Word) intended to sanctify the oblation. When for this Epiklesis was substituted one of the Holy Spirit the first continued in use as a blessing for other objects. Then, when these blessings were dropped, only the form *Per quem hæc omnia*, etc., remained.

This theory has been rejected. Dom Cagin regards the *Per quem hæc omnia . . . Per ipsum . . .* etc. as the solemn conclusion of the Canon. This formula is connected in the Gallican and Visigothic liturgies with another which takes the place of the Roman *Supplices*. Mgr. Batiffol agrees with this view. If there were a blessing of fruits of the earth it only occurred occasionally by means of a formula which preceded the *Per quem hæc omnia* and which could not in consequence be the *Per quem*, etc., itself. It should be noticed, too, that *hæc* designating the fruits to be blessed is not in the Sacramentary of Autun (seventh century) which contains our present form almost literally. The emphasis is on *omnia creas*; it is in the Only Son, Creator of all things, that the Father is glorified. The bread and wine, changed into the Lord's Body and Blood, appear here as the first fruits of all creation which, henceforward, consecrated in them is renewed, sanctified, quickened and blessed; and we, too, shall be transformed when shortly they are given to us as Our Lord's gift in His sacrament.

The Per ipsum.

Here praise of Christ becomes sublime.

Per ip ✠ sum, et cum ip ✠ so, et in ip ✠ so, est tibi Deo Patri ✠ omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus ✠ Sancti, omnis honor et gloria.

Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory.

These words are taken in substance from the Epistle to the Romans: *Ex ipso et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia, ipsi gloria in sæcula*—"For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory for ever" (xi. 36).

It is *through Jesus*, the true "*Mediator of God and men*" (1 Tim. ii. 5), *with Jesus*, equal to the Father, *in Jesus*, consubstantial with His Father, that the same *God the Father Almighty is honoured and glorified.* The Holy Ghost, inseparable from both, co-operates in this Divine work.

At each of the expressions, *through Him*, *with Him*, and *in Him*, the priest makes with the consecrated Host the sign of the Cross over the Chalice, from side to side. When he names the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit* he makes the sign of the Cross outside the Chalice.

At the words "*omnis honor et gloria*" ("all honour and glory") the priest raises slightly the Chalice and the Host together. This was once, as we have seen, the true Elevation of the Mass. It was probably related to the communion of the faithful and indicated that holy things were to be received by the holy. The practice of ringing the bell at this moment recalls the ancient custom.[1]

This elevation, the signal for the congregation to prepare for Communion, should, as in other rites, normally occur immediately before the Fraction. The re-arrange-

[1] In Belgium and some other countries the bell is rung at this Elevation.—NOTE TO ENGLISH EDITION.

ments undergone by the Canon have made it coincide with the preceding doxology.

How can we account for the five signs of the Cross at the *Per Ipsum*, etc. ? They were not in use before the end of the eleventh century. An historical study of the origin of this rite shows that the profound mystical meaning attached to it far surpasses the relative simplicity of its origin. The elevation with which we are dealing, as the *Ordo Romanus I*, the ritual of the ancient pontifical Mass, shows, used to begin at the words *Per Ipsum*, etc. The demonstrative pronoun, repeated three times, was sufficient to suggest the showing of the sacred elements at this point. Now, in elevating the chalice together with the Host the priest touched the edge of the chalice with the Host. Later, in order to emphasise still more strongly the demonstrative *Per Ipsum* and to designate the chalice in more than one place he touched it on the three other sides. How did this work out in practice ? He traced two lines crossing each other at right angles, thus making the sign of the Cross. Now the formula *Per Ipsum* names the Son of God three times ; it was natural, then, to repeat this sign of the Cross three times, that is at each demonstrative and over the Blood of Him who was thus designated. Although the edge of the chalice is no longer touched nowadays, the custom of the three signs of the Cross with the Host over the chalice from side to side has been kept.

The complete doxology of the *Per Ipsum*, mentioning as it does the names of the Father Almighty and of the Holy Spirit, required, according to the principle we have already explained, two additional signs of the Cross. They were made, not over the chalice, which contains the very Blood of Jesus Christ, but outside it : the sign joined to the name of the Father was made in front of

the chalice but higher up—*in alto*, says an old Dominican Missal; the sign joined to mention of the Holy Spirit was made towards the foot of the chalice, *versus pedem*, as the Carmelite Missal puts it; and that is the present practice of the Dominicans. In this way there was established a special relationship between these signs of the Cross, and the position in which they were made was taken as a symbol of the order of divine procession: above, the Father; in the centre, the Son; below, the Holy Spirit. The priest made these signs between the chalice and his chest, and in the same direction as those at *Per Ipsum*. Gradually, and quite naturally, they became fixed in this position.

According to *Ordo Romanus I* the elevation was made by the archdeacon standing at the side of the officiating Pontiff who meanwhile said *Per Ipsum*, etc., and touched the Host and the side of the chalice. There is a slight vestige of this archi-diaconal function in the rubric which prescribes that the deacon should touch the foot of the chalice while the celebrant says *Per Ipsum*.

The Host and chalice used not to be replaced on the corporal until after the words *Omnis honor et gloria per omnia sæcula sæculorum*. Such was the practice at Cluny, Cîteaux, Prémontré, with the monks of Bursfeld, and in many other churches.

The priest by placing the Body and Blood of Our Lord nearer together, or rather by setting the Host above the Precious Blood, signifies the unity of the sacrament of which the faithful are soon now to partake in holy Communion and for which this elevation is the signal. In fact, Christ is contained whole and entire under each species and under each part of a species. All Eastern and Western rites symbolize this unity and at this point

bring forth and show Christ, one in His ineffable mystery for the adoration of the faithful.

The present rubric in the Roman Missal prescribes the elevation of the chalice and Host only at the words *omnis honor et gloria*. It is a relic merely of the ancient custom. In spite of the partial mutilation of the rite it remains true, however, that together with the Consecration it constitutes one of the most solemn acts of the Eucharistic prayer. In the sacred economy of the Mass—fully entitled to our respect—the Little Elevation is to be venerated as the deepest manifestation of the glorification of the adorable Trinity and the highest expression of the oblation made to It of Jesus Christ.

We have come in fact to the end of the Canon, of that important prayer of tremendous significance: the *Per Ipsum* with its solemn doxology and the answer *Amen* is the conclusion of this sublime Eucharistic prayer. It is a potent summary in succinct form of the end for which the Sacrifice has just been offered: *to give thanks* to the thrice-holy God *for His great glory*; that is, for the glory He possesses in Himself, for that which is shown forth in His works, especially in the work of the Incarnate Word, the Redeemer, for the merits He has obtained and applied to men: their salvation effected by Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ ever gives all honour and glory to God.

Immediately the priest continues in a loud voice:

Per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen. For ever and ever. Amen.

This formula is here simply the conclusion of the preceding prayer. But that the people may hear this conclusion, which is that of the *whole Canon*, and respond to it *Amen*, the priest, as at the Preface, says it aloud, or in the case of a Solemn or High Mass, sings it.

The practice of thus separating this conclusion from what precedes it is not very ancient; St. Pius V, in the sixteenth century, definitely sanctioned it. Until then the celebrant said these words whilst elevating the Host and Chalice, as the Carthusians do to this day.

The final *Amen* is, perhaps, the most solemn in all the Roman liturgy. It is the only word which requires the intervention of the congregation in the great Prayer; it is essentially an act of faith in the mystery of the Great Action which has just been celebrated. St. Justin in the second century, St. Denis in the third, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose extol the imposing exclamation "by all this people here present" (Apol. lxv, 3–5). We should sing our assent as real priests and victims of God. All that has been done and said by the priest in the *Canon* is ratified by the people when they reply *Amen*.

Thus is ended this important part of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the longest, the most holy, and the most essential. Another part—the Communion—begins with the Lord's Prayer. The priest comes forth, as it were, from the cloud in which he has seen God face to face and returns to the faithful, whom he must nourish and strengthen.

§ 3. Communion, or Union with the Sacrifice.

From the Pater Noster to the Last Gospel.

Fregit deditque discipulis suis dicens: accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes. . . .

He brake and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this. . .

The priest of Jesus Christ, together with his people, has just performed an act of perfect love: by offering

the eternal victim to God he offers and sacrifices himself with Jesus; he has given to God complete and effective expression of his religion. To sacrificing, offering love, priest and people are about to join that love which unites, which gives communion with the Victim, and will thus share in His ineffable and wonderful state. The prayers which follow are a direct preparation for this divine act of partaking, or else accompany it. "Supper time" (*hora cœnæ*—Luke xiv. 17) is at hand; united in Christian charity let us go to God's banquet. For, we should here notice, the chief preparation for communion remains always charity; the kiss of peace is its touching outward manifestation. Consequently most of the prayers or ceremonies that we are about to explain are concerned principally in drawing closer these bonds of charity, without which we should be unable to partake of the Sacrament of Christian Unity.

The Pater Noster.

The present Roman Missal includes the *Pater* and subsequent prayers under the heading of the Canon; nevertheless the prayers which follow, beginning with the *Pater*, belong liturgically to the rite of Eucharistic communion; the great consecration prayer of the Canon is, in fact, over.

After the *breaking of bread* (the Fraction), following the example set at the Last Supper, the Body of Our Lord will be distributed to the faithful in communion. So will they be united to God and with each other. It only remains to thank God for so great a gift; this thanksgiving is the function of the Postcommunion which gives expression to the immense benefits this gift confers on souls and bodies.

The people having replied *Amen* to the prayers of the Canon, the priest continues, saying :

OREMUS.	LET US PRAY
Præceptis salutaribus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere :	Instructed by Thy saving precepts, and following Thy Divine instructions, we presume to say :

This little introduction to the *Pater Noster* is very ancient. St. Cyprian and St. Jerome already allude to it.

" Christ," says the latter, " taught His apostles to presume, every day in the sacrifice of His Body, to say with faith : ' Our Father.' " This introduction to the *Pater Noster* is to be found in all liturgies. In the Latin liturgy it does not vary. The Ambrosian rite has a special form only on Maundy Thursday and Easter day. The Gallican and Mozarabic liturgies have a different form for every day. The Maronites of Lebanon pray in this fashion : " Lord God, open Thou our mouths and lips, sanctify the bodies and souls of us all, purify our understanding that we may call out to Thee, Father of mercies, that we may call out and say : Our Father, etc." The prayer which is about to be said is so holy that the priest hardly dares to recite it ; it is Christ's prayer, and it is only at His command that he presumes to say it.

Pater noster, qui es in cælis, sanctificetur nomen tuum : adveniat regnum tuum : fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cælo, et in terra ; panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie: et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris ; et ne nos inducas in tentationem.	Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name ; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven; give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation.

The people reply :

Sed libera nos a malo.	But deliver us from evil.

There is no one who is ignorant of the origin of the *Pater Noster ;* Jesus Christ Himself is the author of it. No prayer is to be compared with it for depth, power, and majesty.

St. Jerome, as we have just pointed out, traces the practice of saying the *Pater Noster* at Mass back to Our Lord's command. Almost all liturgies, as well as the Fathers before the time of St. Gregory, bear witness to the primitive use of the Lord's Prayer at the holy Sacrifice. St. Augustine says that almost all churches conclude the Mass with the *Pater—fere omnis ecclesia.* Moreover, the Master laid it down : *Sic orabitis, Pater Noster* . . . (Matt. vi. 9). " It was meet and right indeed," says the learned Cardinal Bona, " that after the most holy action of the Sacrifice should be recited the prayer taught by Christ ; so that having commemorated in the first place His most sorrowful Passion the faithful should merit that their prayers were the more easily heard by God the Father." In addition this prayer sums up the whole Gospel of Jesus and His moral law ; it is the *Breviarium totius evangelii,* as Tertullian calls it. It was extremely fitting to recall this law to the Christian assembly just at this time when God shows man further testimony of His love for the Father of heaven and for men, His brothers upon earth. Before the time of Gregory the Great (the sixth century), the Canon was immediately followed by the Kiss of Peace, the Breaking of the Host, the *Pater Noster,* and the Communion. The aforesaid Pope changed the then existing order, placing the *Our Father* between the Canon and the Kiss of Peace. And why this modification ? For two reasons : first, the *Pater Noster,* on account of its Divine origin, merited a very conspicuous place ; it was fitting that it should follow the Canon, of all prayers of the Mass the most worthy and the most solemn. Moreover, the Lord's Prayer was such a suitable preparation for

the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace. Indeed, the petition "*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us*" naturally inspired the faithful with that kindly charity of which the Kiss of Peace was going to be the evident sign. That is the reason why the *Pater Noster* is recited at Mass and in its present place. Could Holy Church have chosen a more sacred prayer for disposing us for that union of hearts, which will soon be sealed by our communion with Him "*who is our peace*"? (Ephes. ii. 14).

We must here notice a difference in the Greek and Latin Liturgies. In the Greek Church all the people recite or chant the *Pater Noster* with the celebrant. With us the priest alone recites it, the people being content with saying the last petition. "*Sed libera nos a malo*—But deliver us from evil." St. Gregory the Great even speaks of this custom. It is certain, on the other hand, that in the ancient Gallican Liturgy, before Charlemagne's time, the people chanted the *Pater Noster*. St. Gregory of Tours relates that it was while the people were singing the *Pater Noster* that a dumb woman who had come on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Martin felt her tongue loosed, and began to sing with the faithful. In the Mozarabic Liturgy, which is that of the Spanish Churches, the people replied *Amen* to each petition of the Lord's Prayer, except after the fourth, that is, after the words *Panem nostrum* . . . (Give us this day our daily bread) when they said *Quia Deus es:* "because Thou art God."

It is not our intention to give here an explanation of the *Pater Noster*. The Saints and Doctors of the Church have profoundly and fully explained it. We shall only deal now with the *Pater Noster* in so far as it has reference to the Liturgy of the Mass and prepares us for the Communion.

The *daily bread* asked of our Heavenly Father is indeed no other than that which is upon the altar, Jesus Christ, the Bread descended from heaven, which preserves us from eternal death (John vi. 50). The *Our Father* is, then, an immediate preparation for Holy Communion ; this is evident if we bear in mind the moment of the Mass when it was formerly recited.

Formerly, during the *Pater Noster* the congregation prepared for Holy Communion. The custom was for those who were to communicate to go up to the altar during this prayer. In some churches the subdeacon held up the paten to warn the people to get ready for communion. For the same reason at Tours a server showed the paten in the middle of choir, and then returned it to the subdeacon.

A further detail may be added. At Lyons and at Vienne the priest at the words *sicut in cœlo et in terra* raised the Host on high in order to show that these symbols (the Hosts) came from heaven ; he replaced the Host on the altar saying *et in terra* to show that it is to earth that they come for the food of man.

At the words *dimitte nobis* it was the practice to beat the breast in order to acknowledge one's sinfulness and ask pardon of God. St. Augustine says so explicitly in one of his sermons ; and the rubric occurs in many missals. Is not this the time for union with God as we draw nigh to the holy of holies ?

What a grand and solemn prayer is the *Pater Noster* which is recited at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ! St. Augustine regarded it as particularly efficacious against venial sins and in consequence a means of purifying the conscience at the time when we are going to be united with Infinite Purity.

The Libera nos.

After the people have replied "*Sed libera nos a malo,*" the celebrant adds in a low voice *Amen.* Why the priest? Since this practice is possibly of oriental origin the following is probably the reason. In the East when the congregation has sung the *Pater* the celebrant continues it aloud with the following words: *Quia tibi convenit regnum, et virtus et gloria Patri et Filio et sancto Spiritui, nunc et semper et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.* "For Thine is the kingdom, the might and the glory, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, now and for ever, world without end. Amen." Thus do the Greeks conclude their prayers. Consequently the *Amen* was said by the priest. The doxology that led up to it has disappeared with us, but the custom of saying *Amen* has continued. This *Amen* has not always been said after the *Pater Noster*; it used to be added after the prayer "*Libera nos,*" which follows, and which is, after all, but a paraphrase of "*Sed libera nos a malo.*"

In fact the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries do not mention the *Amen,* and it is believed by some liturgists to be a medieval interpolation.

Towards the end of the *Pater Noster* the subdeacon, who has remained at the foot of the altar since the *Sanctus,* ascends the steps, and gives the deacon the paten, which the latter wipes with the purificator. The priest receives it from his minister, and holds it upright on the altar cloth. Meanwhile he recites the following prayer:

Libera nos, quæsumus Domine, ab omnibus malis, præteritis, præsentibus et futuris: et intercedente beata, et gloriosa semper Virgine Dei Genitrice Maria, cum beatis Apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo, atque Andrea, et omnibus Sanctis, da propitius pacem in

Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and future, and by the intercession of the blessed and ever glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and of Thy blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and of Andrew and of all the

diebus nostris, ut ope misericordiæ tuæ adjuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi, et ab omni perturbatione securi.

Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days, that, through the assistance of Thy mercy, we may be always free from sin and secure from all disturbance.

The *Libera nos* is of very ancient origin, and is to be found in the most ancient Sacramentaries, the Gelasian especially, and the *Ordines Romani*. At Rome its form was fixed, but in the Gallican and Visigothic liturgy it varied at each Mass.

Liturgical writers have called this prayer *Embolismus* (development). It is in reality only the completion or development of the last petition of the *Pater Noster*. The evil of which it speaks includes all evils, past, present, and future, evils of both soul and body, from which we beg to be preserved or delivered. The priest consequently asks for *peace:* "*Da propitius pacem in diebus nostris* — Mercifully grant peace in our days."

At one time, after the name of St. Andrew, Peter's brother, who for this reason was always held in especial veneration in the Roman Church, as the *Ordines* testify, the priest was allowed to add the names of other saints, as many as he wished. Fr. Grisar suggests that the name of St. Andrew has remained in this place on account of St. Gregory's devotion to the patron of the monastery founded by him on the Caelian Hill in his father's house. In any case it appears that St. Gregory had something to do with settling the final form of the *Libera nos*.

The moment the priest pronounces the word *peace*, he signs himself with the paten, which he afterwards kisses; here again he indicates by sign the blessing, which he begs by word. It is probable that the invocation of the three Divine Persons in the conclusion which follows (*Per Dominum*, etc.) was formerly accompanied by the sign

of the Cross. Later when this formula was used, as it still is, for the rite of the Fraction, the sign of the Cross was moved forward to the words *da propitius pacem* which convey the same thought as the rest of the sentence. Now this sentence already required the sign of the Cross, and the Meaux Missal, for example, orders the priest to sign himself no less than three times, at the words *adjuti, liberi* and *securi*. For the sign of the Cross is the help and strength of Christians, and at this point protection against troubles and temptations is prayed for; it was natural, consequently, to make the sign of the Cross. The priest uses the paten to sign himself because he is holding it in his hand from the beginning of the *Libera nos*. He kisses the paten after signing himself because it has always been considered as a symbol of peace, an *instrumentum pacis* (or *pax-brede*); it was used at one time to give the kiss of peace to the faithful, but the practice was forbidden; it was even commonly known as the Pax.

Therefore, when the priest says *da . . . pacem* (grant peace) he is led to kiss it as if by this kiss and touching of the paten he should receive the peace which he asks of God. In certain churches, also, before kissing the paten he was directed to touch the sacred Host; it seemed as if he would apply to himself what the paten received by touching the blessed Eucharist, by touching Jesus Christ who is called by the apostle *our peace*.

Formerly after the prayer *Libera nos* and its conclusion *Per Dominum*, before the bishop said *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum* it was the custom in certain churches in France, Spain and Germany to interpolate a solemn blessing (called by liturgists an episcopal blessing because in fact it was reserved to bishops, but in many places priests were accustomed to give it). A missal preserved

at the Vatican, described by Bona, mentions this beautiful rite; we quote his account taken from it:

"When the response *Amen* has been made to the prayer *Libera nos* the Pontiff places the particle of the Host, which in certain places he breaks at this moment, on the paten. Then the deacon, turning towards the congregation and holding the pastoral staff in his hand proclaims in a loud voice *Humiliate vos ad benedictionem*—'Bow down your heads for the blessing.' The choir answers: *Amen*, and continues, 'Prince of the Church, Shepherd of the flock, vouchsafe to bless us.' Then the deacon sings again. 'With meekness and charity bow down for the blessing.' The choir answers: 'Let us call humbly on God, and ever give thanks to Him.' The Pontiff, from the middle of the altar, turns towards the congregation and reads the form of blessing which is proper to the day. At the end of it he adds: *Fiat commixtio* . . . ! May the mixture, etc."

The only blessing of this kind and at this point of the Mass that has been kept in the Roman Missal is the nuptial blessing.

The Breaking of the Host.

At the end of the *Libera nos* the priest breaks the Sacred Host into three portions. We shall say a few words concerning this rite of the Breaking of the Bread.

The Jews used not to cut but break their bread. In conformity with this practice, Our Lord at the Last Supper, when He had consecrated the bread, broke it and distributed it to His Apostles. And He commanded them, in their turn, to break it in *memory of Him*. Thus we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that on Sundays they met together for "breaking" the Eucharist and for partaking of it. This rite was always religiously kept in the primitive

Church ; it even gave its name to the Eucharistic Sacrifice which was called "*the Breaking of Bread.*" When the Liturgy developed, and several prayers and ceremonies were introduced between the Consecration and the Communion, the *Breaking of the Host* was naturally detached from the Consecration and placed before the Communion, for which it prepared, but only after the *Pax Domini* and the Kiss of Peace which we are about to mention. It was not long before a mystical meaning was sought in this ceremony : without forgetting that the Real Presence of the Sacred Humanity is integrally under each sensible particle of the bread, there was seen in the broken Host the Body of Jesus (metaphorically) broken by His sufferings for our sins. This symbolism reacted even on the ceremony which originally served no other purpose than the distribution of the consecrated Bread ; the Eastern Liturgy divided the Host into four parts, the Mozarabic into nine. Both gave to these particles, which the celebrant had to arrange in the form of a cross, names borrowed from the principal mysteries of the Redemption. Thus the Mozarabic rite breaks the consecrated Bread into nine particles to represent the nine different states of Jesus Christ —His Incarnation, Birth, Circumcision, Transfiguration, Passion, Death, Resurrection, His Glory and His Kingdom. The Roman Church, always more temperate in her Liturgy and more discreet in her mysticism, preserved the simplicity of the early rite and only divided the Host for distribution. It was customary to reserve one portion of the Sacred Host until the Sacrifice of the following day ; this was presented to the Bishop for him to adore, when he went to the altar at the Introit, and had to be placed by him in the Chalice before the breaking of the new Host as he said *Pax Domini*

sit semper vobiscum, which comes later. As he said it he made three signs of the Cross over the chalice and let fall the particle (called the *Sancta*) into the chalice.

Why was this particle put into the chalice? There may have been a very practical reason for this. The hosts in primitive times were thicker than ours; the particles may have become hard and dry for one reason or another, the time taken to send them to their destination, for example. It was natural then to moisten the particle in the chalice.

Whatever the origin of the practice other lofty motives explained this practice. In this way the moral unity of the sacrifice celebrated one day with that of another was affirmed, the continuity of the Sacrifice of the Cross in all ages. Everywhere, in all liturgical assemblies it is the same Eucharist and the same communion.

Other particles, fragments of the Host consecrated by him, were sent by the Pope to the bishops of the suburbican sees and to the priests of the titular churches in Rome, who placed it in their chalice for communion. This *fermentum*—probably leavened bread was used—became the sign of the close union between him who offered the sacrifice and those who received the particles. The Roman Church attached great importance to the fact that the rites of communion should be a clear and vivid expression of ecclesiastical unity.

As may be seen in both cases (the *Sancta* and the *fermentum*), no rite was more full of expression than the *commixtio.* Is it not in His adorable Blood, shed for us, that Christ has consecrated, by His one oblation, all the sacrifices which commemorate it? And is it not in this same Blood that men are united and find that "one heart and one soul" praised by Scripture? The largest portion of the Sacred Species was naturally destined for

the Communion of the celebrant, his ministers, and the faithful; all ate and drank of the same Species, some drops even being poured from the chalice destined for the Bishop and priest into that intended for the people, to represent in a material manner, as it were, that all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. These customs have disappeared.

In the present Liturgy the priest divides the Host into three parts, one of which he lets fall into the chalice. This might well recall the presanctified particle which was formerly placed in the sacred vessel. The two remaining portions are to remind us that celebrant and faithful partook in a sensible manner of the same Bread of Life. Let us remember, however, that if this sensible form has disappeared, the reality has remained unchanged. In one of her most magnificent prayers the Church says: "*Pour into us, O Lord, the spirit of Thy charity, that Thy grace may unite those whom Thou hast satiated with the same celestial bread.*" How can I, then, have any ill-feeling towards any one of my brethren, to whom Jesus gives as well as to me His Body to eat and His Blood to drink?

Whilst breaking the Host, the priest says in a low voice the conclusion of the prayer *Libera nos:*

Per eumdem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus.

Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth God.

Then in a loud voice:

Per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

World without end. Amen.

And with one of the three particles, which he holds between his thumb and index finger, he makes thrice the sign of the Cross over the chalice, saying:

Pax ✠ Domini sit ✠ semper vobis ✠ cum.	The peace of the Lord be always with you.

The people reply:

Et cum spiritu tuo.	And with thy spirit.

Dropping the particle into the chalice, the priest says in a low voice:

Hæc commixtio, et consecratio Corporis et Sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, fiat accipientibus nobis in vitam æternam. Amen.	May this mixture and consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us receiving it effectual to eternal life. Amen.

The second *Ordo Romanus* lays down clearly that the Pontiff makes three signs of the Cross at the words *fiat commixtio et consecratio Corporis et Sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi;* the words *consecratio* (a synonym for *benedictio*) *Corporis, Sanguinis*, suggested these signs as we have explained above. They have now become unnecessary as a result of those added at *Pax Domini*.

Such is the present rite of the Fraction and of the *Commixtio* (or Mixture) of the particle with the Precious Blood.

The Fraction used to be preceded by the kiss of peace which was joined to the *commixtio* and given with the formula *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*. Nowadays our Fraction comes before the *Commixtio* which itself precedes the kiss. We shall endeavour to explain this anomaly.

We have said already that at each Mass a sacred particle was reserved for the sacrifice on the following day; others were sent, as a sign of union, to bishops and priests. Now the oldest *Ordines Romani* prove that it was this particle that the Pontiff or the priests placed in the chalice at the *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum* before the Fraction

had taken place. At the time of Communion, later in the Mass, the celebrant placed in the chalice another particle that he had broken off from his own Host at the Fraction. In later times the *commixtio* with the first particle was no longer in use and the second *commixtio* gradually came to take the place of the first and was put back to the *Pax Domini* which was said when the kiss of peace was given; the Host was broken earlier, namely at the end of the *Libera nos* during the *Per Dominum*, etc., which is the conclusion of the prayer.

What then was the *Pax Domini*? It was the signal for the kiss of peace which was given before the communion. The first *Ordo Romanus* describes clearly how "when the Pope has said *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum* the archdeacon kisses the paten containing the *Sancta* and gives the Pax to the first bishop who gives it to the next and so in order." At Milan, directly after the words *Pax Domini* the deacon announced to the faithful, "Offer ye yourselves the peace!" The Sacramentaries prescribed that directly after the *Pax Domini* the priest is to kiss the altar or the paten in order to receive the Pax and give it to his ministers. Still to-day it is with these words that at an ordination of priests the bishop kisses each one of them saying, *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*. The Gelasian Sacramentary remarks that on Maundy Thursday since the kiss of peace is not given the *Pax Domini* is to be omitted. This is the practice also on Good Friday. The kiss of peace is nowadays postponed until after the first prayer of the three which prepare immediately for Communion—*Domine Jesu Christe qui dixisti*. Moreover it is probably the kiss of peace which accounts for this fairly modern prayer as well as for the words *dona nobis pacem* in the last petition of the *Agnus Dei*. Formerly and in primitive times the third *Agnus*

Dei concluded, like the two other petitions, with *Miserere nobis*. The separation of *Pax Domini* from the kiss of peace made necessary the addition of prayers expressing the same idea.

What is the origin and symbolism of what was the second (and is now the only) mixture of the particle of the Body of Our Lord with His Precious Blood? The following remarks may help to explain it.

It is well known that the primitive custom was to communicate under the two species of bread and wine. Now it is clear from authentic documents that when the species of wine began to be exhausted on account of the number of communicants unconsecrated wine was added to the chalice as the consecrated wine was finished. In order to sanctify and, as it were, *consecrate* this wine (obviously there is no idea here of transubstantiation), so that it could take the place in some sort of the sacred element, a particle of the consecrated Host was mixed with it and this, as is proved by history, remained in the wine until after the communion of the congregation. In fact it was formerly the duty of the deacon and subdeacon to consume this particle together with what remained of the wine after the communion of the faithful. When the custom of communicating the faithful under both kinds ceased the ceremony of adding the particle remained, but the deacon and subdeacon also no longer communicated from the chalice; hence the rubric in the Missal: "The celebrant reverently consumes all the Precious Blood together with the particle placed in the chalice." It seems then that in the formula at the Mixture the word *consecratio* designates a special blessing. Concerning this mixture the *Ordinarium* of the monastery of St. Evre of Toul in France directs: "Let the *commixtio* be made

and thus the wine will be sanctified." In this case it was unconsecrated wine that was in question.

The same ceremony is still observed on Good Friday when at Mass of the Presanctified a particle of the consecrated Host is added to unconsecrated wine. That has always been the custom. We know, too, that on that day communion was general in France and at Rome, as the Gregorian Sacramentary proves. So it seems that by contact with the Lord's Body the wine was sanctified and thus, in a certain sense, took the place of the species which was not consecrated on that day. Hence that expression used by the first council of Orange: *Calix admixtione Eucharistiæ consecrandus.*

We know that the present rite of Mass retains old customs as far as possible; that sometimes it has telescoped them into this or that ceremony which we hardly understand nowadays. Perhaps the rite of Low Mass has caused this contraction.

There is another legitimate and certainly authentic explanation. Holy Church by means of a ceremony carried out for a practical purpose may intend also to symbolize certain mysteries. Some authors claim that the words *commixtio et consecratio* designate, *though, of course, quite independently of the transubstantiation effected and completed earlier in the Mass*, a special consecration of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. From the mixture of the two species, they say, from the mutual connexion, immediate contact and union, from this *inter-communication* of their whole dignity, virtue and efficacy, there results as it were a sublime *interconsecration* of both. We dare not penetrate into such high matters, but would point out, nevertheless, that several authorities take the words *commixtio et consecratio*, which are abstract terms, for the corresponding concrete terms *commixta et con-*

secrata. In that case the formula would mean: "May the consecrated and mingled Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ be to us receiving it effectual to eternal life." In fact, at Milan used to be said: *Commixtio consecrati Corporis et Sanguinis.* It is certain, and proved by all liturgies, those of the East particularly, that the rites of the Church tend at a certain point in the Mass to unite the two species. The exact reason for the practice is difficult to assign.

The following is a brief résumé of the theological explanation of this mysterious rite given by the most famous of the early liturgists. They see in the mingling together of the Body and Blood of Our Lord a symbol of His glorious Resurrection. We must repeat, however, that the holy Council of Trent has defined that by virtue of the sacramental words pronounced over the bread the Body alone is consecrated; likewise by virtue of the sacramental words pronounced over the wine the Blood alone is consecrated. It is of faith, nevertheless, that this separation is only mystical since by concomitance the Body cannot exist without the Blood, nor the Blood without the Body. But Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is truly present in His living and glorious body. Since the Mass is the renewal of the sacrifice offered by Jesus on the Cross, and now by Jesus in His glory, it is proper that in the Mass this death and this glorious life should be represented. In this way the Body and the Blood, consecrated separately, are a figure of the death of Jesus. Their reunion by the *commixtio*—the mingling together—is a symbol of the glorious life that He took on at His resurrection. The species of bread, penetrating, and penetrated by, the species of wine, teaches us the unity of the Body and Blood in the living and glorious Body of Jesus Christ.

At the same time such considerations show once more how holy Mass is an epitome of the mysteries of Jesus Christ. His resurrection, since it was the supreme victory over death, both His and ours, is the completion of the work of our redemption and the inauguration of the reign of His life in us. It was necessary for this to be reaffirmed at the sacrifice of the altar in which He applies to us the merits of this redemption, giving life to our souls and developing in them the complete mystery of the Word Incarnate until we are joined to Him in eternal glory, in that glory whereof He will give us the highest pledge in the sacrament which bestows eternal life. That is an interpretation, on the highest level, of the word *consecration*, and brings out the full meaning of this form for the *commixtio* at this point of the Mass: "May this mixture and consecration of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ be to us receiving it effectual to eternal life."

Between the *Pater* and the *Agnus Dei* the Church was accustomed to insert special suffrages or prayers as occasion demanded. For example, the Salzburg Missal of 1555 prescribes on Lenten and other ferial days, immediately before the *Pax Domini*, three psalms with an antiphon, versicles and collects; the first is to be said for the recovery of the Holy Land, the second for the Pope, the third for the king. In the same way Popes Nicholas III (1277–80) and John XXII (1316–1334) ordered a psalm with a collect to be said after the *Pax Domini* at High Mass, the first for peace and the second for overcoming a schism. Lastly the *Liber Sacramentorum* of the Roman Church mentions that, after the *Pax Domini* which followed the celebrant's communion, and before that of the rest of the clergy and of the congregation,

the station for the following day, feasts, fasts and other ecclesiastical functions shall be announced. We have already pointed out that our forebears preferred to connect everything with the holy sacrifice, but it should be noticed that these announcements have a different liturgical significance from the blessings previously referred to. These notices were given out at this point principally to enable those of the congregation who were not going to communicate to leave the church before the communion. The suffrages and additional prayers lately mentioned may be explained by the fact that from a liturgical point of view this part of the Mass was not too well provided with suitable prayers. Consequently, private devotions tended to encumber it much in the same way as they did the offertory. When Pius V effected his reform of the Missal some of these prayers were retained and others were abolished.

The Agnus Dei.

The priest continues:

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.	Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.	Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.	Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, give us peace.

This touching formula is well known to the faithful, for the Church has transferred it from the Holy Sacrifice into her Litanies. It is borrowed, at least partly, from St. John the Baptist, who, seeing our Saviour passing, pointed Him out to his disciples, saying: "*Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world*" (St. John i. 29).

The Gregorian Sacramentary mentions the *Agnus Dei*. The old *Ordines Romani* do not say how many times it is to be repeated; it is probable that it was sung formerly until the fraction was over, and this at one time was fairly long. After the eleventh century it was said three times. Pope Sergius I laid down that "it should be sung by clergy and people at the time of the breaking of the Lord's Body." It appears that the practice was modified at Rome, for the twelfth-century liturgists remark that at that period the *Agnus Dei* was a chant reserved to the *Schola Cantorum*; but it was not then said by a bishop; since then, of course, the practice has become general of all celebrants, with their ministers, saying it at the altar.

Until the eleventh century the three *Agnus Deis* were all terminated in the same way. This is still the custom at the Church of St. John Lateran in Rome. The "*Dona nobis pacem*—Give us peace" has been substituted for "*Miserere nobis*—Have mercy on us," because of the Kiss of Peace which is about to be mutually given, and which the prayer thus modified announces. Other authors—for example, Innocent III (*The Mystery of the Mass*)—think that the change was made owing to certain troubles that afflicted the Church at that time.

In Mass for the Dead the last words of each of the three invocations are changed for "*Dona eis requiem*—Grant them rest." To the third "*Dona eis requiem*" is added "*Sempiternam*—Everlasting." This practice was universal even in the twelfth century. The Ambrosian Liturgy has no other form of the *Agnus Dei* than the last mentioned, and recites it only at Masses for the Dead; at the end of the third petition is added: *et locum indulgentiæ cum sanctis tuis in gloria*—"and a place of pardon with Thy saints in glory."

Each time the priest recites the *Agnus Dei*, he strikes his breast at the words "*Miserere nobis*" and "*Dona nobis pacem*," as a sign of sorrow and of fervour. This he does not do at Requiem Masses, the reason of which is obvious. The Dominicans do not strike their breast at the *Agnus Dei*.

In the eleventh century, Ivo of Chartres considers that it is done three times on account of the three parts of the divided Host which the priest formerly held in his hand at this point and looked at as he said *Agnus Dei*. In certain churches, in fact, the particle was not dropped into the chalice until after the *Agnus Dei* had been said.

The *Agnus Dei* is, as we have said, a direct preparation for the Kiss of Peace, and indirectly for Holy Communion. So great is the mystery of love about to be wrought, and such the purity it demands, that priest and people feel the need of imploring mercy from the Immaculate Lamb, who effaces all our sinful stains. They pray for peace—"*that peace of God which surpasses all understanding*" (Phil. iv. 7), and which will prepare them to receive with recollection and devotion Him who is about to come to them.

The Prayer before the Kiss of Peace.

The first of these prayers is a preparation for the Kiss of Peace. Formerly the *Pax* was given at once, without any other prayer, at *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*. The prayer *Domine Jesu Christe* was not said at Rome in the eleventh century; Durandus mentions it in the thirteenth century. But it is to be found in the ancient "Mass of Illyricus" (c. 900) in the *Codex Ratoldi*, and in a tenth-century sacramentary of Trier. The old Gallican Missal and the Mozarabic Missal have a prayer for peace which varies at each Mass and is called *Oratio ad pacem*.

We may notice in passing that our present prayer in some of its expressions resembles the *Te igitur*. What a beautiful prayer it is that asks peace before all else for the whole Church of Jesus Christ. The liturgy is always concerned principally with the collectivity, Christian society. The priest prays to God not to regard his personal unworthiness, *ne respicias peccata mea*, but to see him in the unity of all the faithful, *sed fidem Ecclesiæ tuæ.*

Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis: pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis; ne respicias peccata mea sed fidem Ecclesiæ tuæ; eamque secundum voluntatem tuam pacificare et coadunare digneris; qui vivis et regnas Deus per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst to Thy Apostles: peace I leave to you, My peace I give unto you; regard not my sins, but the faith of Thy Church; and grant her that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy will: who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

This prayer implores only *peace*, which should unite the faithful more closely, and so prepare them for Communion.

The Kiss of Peace exchanged at Mass is simply the symbol of that charity which should unite all who approach the Holy Table. A few words, then, about the Kiss of Peace, which, as we have said, occurred originally at the *Pax Domini*.

The celebrant, bending down a little, recites the above prayer; he then kisses the altar and gives the embrace, or pax, to the deacon. The latter conveys the pax to the subdeacon, who, in a collegiate or conventual Mass, gives it to those in the choir.

We have already explained above the meaning attached to the kissing of the altar. The altar represents Jesus Christ; it is the peace of the God-Man that the priest receives on kissing the altar. This is so true that in the thirteenth century the custom of even kissing the Host was propagated in many churches in France. Elsewhere they

kissed the chalice, the corporal, or the pall, all of which come into immediate contact with the Precious Body of Jesus Christ. The missal of 1556 of the Abbey of St. Remi at Rheims prescribes that the priest is to say as he kisses the Host—*Pax tua sit mihi, Christe*—"May Thy peace be mine, O Christ." In other places the priest used to kiss the Cross marked in the margin of the Missal for this purpose. The Dominicans used to kiss the side of the chalice except in Masses for the Dead, even at Low Masses, and then the "pax instrument" (or "pax-brede") that the deacon presented to the celebrant who said: *Pax tibi et Ecclesiæ sanctæ Dei*—"Peace be to thee and to the holy Church of God." The practice of the Ambrosian rite is very moving. The priest makes the sign of the Cross on the altar, kisses it and kisses too the cross in the Missal. Then he says: "Peace in heaven, peace on earth, peace to all people, peace to the priests of the Church, and may the peace of Christ and of His Church remain always with us." In the Roman rite now the altar alone is kissed.

The place for the Kiss of Peace varied considerably in the different rites. The Orientals, the Mozarabic and Gallican rites place it before the Offertory. There could be no question of beginning the sacrifice without reconciliation, if it was necessary, with one's brothers in Christ. For was it not the Master's teaching?—"If . . . thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother. . ." (Matt. v. 24). By the beginning of the fifth century at least the Latin Churches put the Kiss of Peace at the time of the *Pax Domini*. Since then it has been put later still, as we have said, and has thus caused the introduction of new prayers like the *Dona nobis pacem* in the *Agnus Dei* and the *Domine Jesu Christe qui dixisti*.

The Kiss of Peace was given in the form of an actual kiss until the middle of the thirteenth century. Towards that period there appeared the "pax instrument" (*osculatorium*), "the tablet of peace" (*tabula pacis*), or "the kissing-stone" (*marmor deosculandum*). In some churches in Germany, at nuptial Masses, the bride and bridegroom kiss the picture of the Crucifixion which is in the Missal just before the Canon. Moreover, in certain parts of Flanders at the ceremony of Churching, the mother is made to kiss the pax at this moment in the Mass.

For many centuries, as we have said, the pax was only given in the form of a real kiss. It has always been regarded as the most evident sign of charity and brotherhood—for are not Christians brethren? Everyone thus saluted his neighbour—the men each other on one side of the church and the women on the other. The greatest importance was attached to this ceremony, the signification of which was so profound. St. Augustine, speaking of it, says: "That which is expressed by the lips ought to have a corresponding effect in the conscience—that is, just as your lips approach those of your brother, so your heart should itself unite with his heart." As faith grew gradually cold, the symbol of the Kiss of Peace was no longer understood. Use was then made for the laity of an instrument, which, having been first kissed by the priest, was then passed round the congregation. Soon the practice fell into disuse. Nowadays the clergy alone observe it.

As the priest gives the Kiss of Peace, he says: "*Pax tecum*—Peace be with you." He who receives it replies: "*Et cum spiritu tuo*—And with thy spirit." In certain churches the formula slightly varied. For example, at Paris was said: "*May peace be given to you, my brother, and to the Holy Church of God.*" Sometimes, also, there was

added: "*That you may be in a becoming state to draw near to the Holy Mysteries.*" These last words give the fundamental meaning of the ceremony: we must love one another if we would draw near to the Sacrament of Love. In the Dominican rite the subdeacon, or the second acolyte, brings the "instrument of peace" to the choir; it is taken by him or by one of the cantors to each friar with the formula, *Pax tibi et Ecclesiæ sanctæ Dei.*

Finally, we have to observe that this ceremony does not take place at Mass for the Dead. It appears that originally this Mass was private without communion of the congregation, and the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace belongs to the Communion. For the departed the priest has asked peace and rest, not only at the Canon, but also in many of the parts of the Liturgy proper to *Requiem* Masses, in the Introit, the Gradual, and even the Epistle. The compassion we feel for their souls cannot be expressed by any sensible manifestation, but only by an aspiration of the heart. At *Requiem* Masses the preceding prayer, which clearly applies to the Church Militant, is omitted, as is also the Kiss of Peace. Let us add that the Church does not allow the Kiss of Peace to be given on the three last days of Holy Week, in order to show her horror at the sacrilegious kiss of Judas.

Prayers before the Communion.

Immediately following the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace are two prayers which are directly preparatory to the Communion and which personally concern the priest, consequently he recites them under his breath, with eyes fixed upon the Sacred Host, to which the prayers are addressed. Meanwhile he remains bowed down as a sign of humble reverence. They are as follows:

Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris, cooperante Spiritu sancto, per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti: libera me per hoc sacrosanctum Corpus et Sanguinem tuum ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis, et universis malis; et fac me tuis semper inhærere mandatis, et a te nunquam separari permittas. Qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, according to the will of the Father, hast by Thy death, through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, given life to the world; deliver me by this Thy most sacred Body and Blood from all my iniquities, and from all evils; and make me always adhere to Thy commands. Never suffer me to be separated from Thee. Who, with the same God the Father and Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

Perceptio Corporis tui, Domine Jesu Christe, quod ego indignus sumere præsumo, non mihi proveniat in judicium et condemnationem; sed pro tua pietate prosit mihi ad tutamentum mentis et corporis, et ad medelam percipiendam: qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Let not the participation of Thy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation; but through Thy piety, may it be a safeguard and remedy both to soul and body; who with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

These prayers are scarcely as old as those which have preceded; their character as individual prayers points to this. The old *Ordines Romani* do not mention them. Originally the Communion took place just after the Kiss of Peace. But whilst the *Agnus Dei* was being sung and the Kiss of Peace given, priests were wont, before communicating, to recite, according to their devotion, some private prayers to prepare themselves more directly for this great act. It should be noticed that the position of these two prayers varied in different churches. In the Mass of Illyricus, in Ratoldus and in several other Missals, the prayer *Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi* is placed after the priest's communion. Du Tillet's Missal inserts the prayer *Perceptio* between the two communions; the Tours Missal, also, places it after the communion. In

fact these prayers are as suitable, perhaps even more suitable, after communion. The *Apostolic Constitutions* contain a prayer which is similar in thought to the *Perceptio Corporis tui* and they note that it is suitably said after Holy Communion.

The author of the *Micrologus* (eleventh century) mentions only the first of these prayers, *Domine Jesu Christe*, and points out that it is not prescribed by any *Ordo*, but is of monastic origin. It may be found in the Sacramentary of St. Vaast (tenth century) and in many eleventh-century manuscripts. In Dom Martène's *De antiquis Ecclesiæ ritibus* (Vol. I, c. iv) may be found many prayers for before and after communion taken from old Missals. They were introduced into the liturgy by the private authority of the bishops; hence their great diversity in the different local churches. For some centuries past Rome has used the two prayers now to be found in the Roman Missal.

The ten prayers grouped around the communion are, with one exception, of an individual nature. In this connexion the *Micrologus* makes the following noteworthy remark: "Those who keep zealously to the old traditions have taught us to shorten these private prayers and would rather that at Mass we preferred public prayers. In fact the blessed pope Innocent, writing to the bishops Augustine and Aurelius, asserts that we profit more by public prayers said for all than by private prayers said for individuals." How our forebears loved the brotherhood, the Catholic community, how well they understood the dogma of the communion of saints and what benefit they derived from it!

The prayer *Perceptio* also is quite old; it may even have been in use before the *Domine Jesu Christe*; in fact it alone is said on Good Friday. The old *Ordo* of Ratoldus

of Corbie (tenth century) mentions it. Like the two preceding prayers it was given its present definitive position in the Roman Missal by St. Pius V in 1570.

It is desirable that the faithful should recite these prayers with the priest, especially if they intend to communicate, since they contain sentiments which dispose for the holy reception of the Heavenly Bread. The first begs from Our Lord the great gift of final perseverance and an interior union with Him—a union which realizes the avoidance of sin and unswerving faithfulness to the law of God. The second inspires him who is about to receive his God with fear and humility, and solicits the salutary fruits which come to us from the Divine Presence within us.

The Communion.

The Communion is a rite which if not a necessary part is at least an integral part and completes the Sacrifice. The Christian must unite himself to the great liturgical Action of the altar, a complete expression of the worship due to God, with His eternal High Priest and with His sacred Victim in order to perfect within him the work of redemption. This union is effected by communion. The sacrifice at which we communicate symbolizes and effects our union with God and through Him with our neighbour. That surely should emphasize sufficiently the importance of communion, made at the holy Sacrifice; without it Mass is, so to say, incomplete. Hence the warning of the Council of Trent: "The sacred synod desires that *at every Mass the faithful present should communicate* not only by spiritual desire but sacramentally in order that there may be imparted to them a more abundant fruit from this holy sacrifice." Without continual compenetration of sacrifice and sacrament in the

Eucharistic rite there can be no true understanding of what holy Mass is.

First, a few words concerning the *priest's Communion*. Everyone knows that the *Communion* is an integral part of the Holy Sacrifice, so much so that, should a priest for any reason be unable to continue the Mass after the Consecration, another must finish it, communicating in his place.

As soon as he has recited the two prayers of which we have just spoken the priest, according to *Ordo Romanus XIV*, should say other prayers (not specified) " which are in the book " (i.e. the Missal). The two following are mentioned by the famous Durandus (thirteenth century).

The priest genuflects, adores his God, rises and says :

Panem cælestem accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo.

I will take the bread of Heaven, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

These words express great respect mingled with fear. Then he takes the consecrated Host which he holds between the thumb and index finger of his left hand ; he places the paten between this index finger and the other fingers, then, bowing, with devotion he says thrice in succession, in a moderate tone, each time striking his breast :

Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum : sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof ; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.

The *Panem cœlestem* is merely an anthem composed after the pattern of the *Calicem salutaris*, mentioned below, and corresponding with it. This is shown by the fact that the Ambrosian rite has completed it with the very words that accompany the *Calicem salutaris*.

The words *Domine non sum dignus* are taken from the Gospel of St. Luke vii. 6, where the centurion beseeches

the cure of his servant. Several churches prescribed this verse but only as a matter of devotion, and many Missals do not mention it. The Dominicans say it only before the Communion of the faithful and not before the priest's communion. What a beautiful prayer it is and how well it reminds the priest of his unworthiness and the merciful condescension of his God who comes to visit him. The Mozarabic rite prescribes the following prayer at this point: "I salute Thee, O Flesh of Jesus Christ, for ever holy, Thee, who art before all and above all my supreme delight."

The priest takes the Sacred Body of the Lord into his right hand, and, making therewith the sign of the Cross over himself, says:

Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam. Amen.	May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.

Several ancient Missals show this formula, as well as the corresponding one for the chalice, finishing with the words *In nomine Patris*, etc. That is the reason for the sign of the Cross made at this point by the priest; it is at the same time an act of faith in Jesus Crucified whose Flesh is given for the food of man.

The priest remains a short time in meditation, but he must not recite any vocal prayers. He then uncovers the chalice and genuflects, saying:

Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?	What return shall I make the Lord for all He has given to me?

Already gratitude overflows from this priestly heart satiated with his Lord. He next gathers on to the paten the sacred particles—the *precious pearls*, as the Greek Liturgy calls them—which may have fallen from the Host

upon the corporal. He then takes in his hand the chalice, and, borrowing other verses from Psalm cxv, he says:

Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo. Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.

I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. Praising, I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies.

He again makes the sign of the Cross over himself saying:

Sanguis Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam æternam. Amen.

May the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.

Let us notice in passing those expressions: "*May the Body. . . May the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting.*" *Life everlasting* is indeed the great fruit of the Eucharist, which prepares for it, leads to it, and is the pledge of it. Christ Himself has said: "*He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*" (St. John vi. 55). The seed is sown in the soul, and will spring up therein.

We must still say a few words about the *Communion of the faithful.* It were greatly to be desired, and it certainly is in agreement with the rubrics and the spirit of the Liturgy, that the people should communicate after the Communion of the priest. Such was always the practice in olden times. The great number of communicants has, however, led to its being permissible to delay giving Holy Communion until the end of Mass, so that those who only assist at the Holy Sacrifice may not be obliged to remain too long. It must be emphasized that the liturgy of the Mass loses much of its charm, of its interest and especially of its virtue for those who do not communicate. He who has understood once and for all what the Mass is will want

to communicate often, and even every day ; in that way will be solved the question of *frequent and daily communion* which is very properly to the fore at the present time. Such a practice if it were general would be a return to the Roman piety of the fourth century.

Every Christian is aware that for many centuries Communion *under both species*—now the privilege of the priest—was given to all the faithful. This manner of receiving the Sacrament, though never of precept, was the general custom in some places until the fifteenth century. It was abolished by the Council of Constance (1414–1418), and the decree was finally confirmed by the Council of Trent.

It is not impossible that the feast of *Corpus Christi*, the feast of the *Body* of Christ, which directs attention more especially to the worship of the sacred Host, after the thirteenth century and in consequence of the revelations of St. Juliana of Cornillon at Liège, was the cause of greater veneration being paid to the Host and so encouraged communion under one kind.

Since then the Church has very wisely abolished this custom, out of respect for the Precious Blood, which used to be exposed to the danger of being spilled, and also out of regard for the manners of a more delicate society. In our humble opinion the chief reason for the withdrawal of the chalice was the custom which became common of receiving communion after Mass ; communion under two kinds could only be given at Mass, that is obvious. In any case the principle of communion under two kinds, in memory of what Jesus did, is always safeguarded since at every Mass the priest who offers in our name communicates of the Body and Blood of Jesus. Let us, however, give some details concerning the practice of our ancestors.

In the first place it must be pointed out that the con-

gregation did not say the *Confiteor* as is the practice nowadays ; it is a recent introduction. It may be derived from the rite of communion of the sick which generally took place outside Mass, or from the custom of communicating before or after Mass. Gradually the practice was introduced at every communion made out of Mass (as is done nowadays) ; thence, about the thirteenth century, it was added to communions which were made at Mass. In fact the rite appears to be a repetition of what has already taken place at the beginning of Mass at the foot of the altar. The primitive liturgy was not fond of such repetitions.

After having replied to the *Confiteor* by the *Misereatur* and the *Indulgentiam*, the priest takes one of the additional Hosts which he has consecrated at the same Mass, a practice which is in full conformity with the liturgy, or, if he is celebrating at an altar at which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, takes the ciborium and, holding up a consecrated Host, he shows it to the people, saying : " *Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world.*" He repeats on behalf of the faithful, as he has just done for himself, the words of the centurion : " *Domine non sum dignus . . .*—Lord, I am not worthy . . ." He then distributes the Sacred Species, saying : " *May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life eternal.*" That formula is to be found in the *Micrologus*. The primitive form was shorter. The *Apostolic Constitutions*, St. Augustine, the treatise *de Sacramentis* all mention as the most usual form : *Corpus Christi* (" The Body of Christ ") said by the priest to which the communicant answered *Amen*. The deacon in presenting the chalice (it was his office) said : *Sanguis Christi, calix vitæ* (" The Blood of Christ, the chalice of life ") and again the communicant answered *Amen*.

The following was the order of communion at Mass: at solemn Masses when the priest had communicated he gave the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, under both kinds, to the priests who had concelebrated with him; the deacons, of whom there were several, received the Host from the celebrant and the chalice from assistant priests; the subdeacons and the rest of the clergy received the Body of Jesus Christ from the celebrant and the chalice from the deacons. All the priests assisting at the altar together with the celebrant helped in the distribution of the Body of Christ to the congregation, row by row, in order to save time. The deacons went round with the chalice. At Rome, in the seventh century, use was made of a golden or silver tube through which the faithful used to draw and suck in the Precious Blood and this was the medieval practice. The author of the *Imitation* alludes to this practice (Book iv, c. 4). During the same period the rite of communicating under both Species underwent many changes. In some countries the priest poured some drops of consecrated wine into a larger quantity of unconsecrated wine, and it was of the latter that the people partook at Holy Communion. In other countries the priest gave them the Sacred Host after it had been lightly dipped into the consecrated wine. However, the custom of distributing pure consecrated wine prevailed.

At one time all the faithful communicated standing up, probably because, in the East as well as the West, it was forbidden to pray kneeling in paschal time and on Sundays, the time of year and day of the week when people generally went to communion. Formerly the men received the Host in the right hand — *Conjunctis manibus*, as St. Augustine says — the women in the same hand covered with a linen cloth, which was called the *dominical*, because it was destined to receive the Body of the Lord.

Each communicant answered *Amen*, as did St. Melania when she was dying, and kissed the bishop's hand, as is still the practice. *Amen* is no longer said save by the ordinands at an ordination.

The priest does not give the blessing to the faithful after communion received during Mass for the very good reason that it is given at the end of the Mass.

The rubric dealing with the Communion of the faithful ends with the following words: "The server presents to those who have communicated a vessel containing wine and water and a napkin to wipe the mouth." This ceremony is not performed nowadays, save on rare occasions—as, for instance, at ordinations, at the religious profession of monks, and, among the Carthusians and Dominicans, at Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday. The practice, however, was general in the Latin Church before the fifteenth century, at which epoch Communion under both Species ceased to be given. It was observed at Menin until the end of the sixteenth century, notably on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, sometimes even on other great feasts of the year. The origin of it was the difficulty experienced by the faithful in swallowing properly the Sacred Host, which, owing to its size, was liable to adhere to the teeth or palate. There being no longer any reason for this practice, it has been discontinued.

As a conclusion to our commentary on the rite of Communion we quote the marvellous funeral inscription of Pectorius (beginning of the third century) deciphered at Autun in 1839 by Dom Pitra, monk of Solesmes and later Cardinal. It calls on the baptized faithful to pay due reverence to Christ in the Eucharist under the well-known symbol of the *Fish*:

"O divine race of the heavenly Fish, receive with reverent heart Life Immortal among mortals, in the divine

waters. And so fashion your soul to the heavenly waves of Wisdom which bestow such treasures. Receive the Food, sweet as honey, of the Saviour of the Saints. Satisfy your hunger, you hold the Fish in your hands!"

Now is concluded this very important part of the Mass of the Faithful which we have called *Union with the Sacrifice*. But that is not all. After sacrificing love comes unitive love. The Christian who has fed on the divine Victim has entered fully into the dispositions of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice has taken place; from this moment onwards loving thanksgiving is the dominant note.

The Ablutions.

The prayers and ceremonies that follow form the thanksgiving of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The priest and the faithful, after having offered to God the Father the Body and Blood of His Divine Son Jesus, have been nourished and strengthened thereby. It is but fitting that they should thank the Lord for so many graces. This liturgical thanksgiving which the faithful make in union with the priest should above all others be pleasing to God. For it is Jesus Himself who through the mouth of His Church gives expression to it. How wonderful is His praise, how powerful His intercession.

We have now reached the *Ablutions*—that is, the purification of the chalice and of the fingers which have touched the Precious Body and Blood. Until the thirteenth century the priest performed this rite in the following way: he purified the chalice with water and wine, which were afterwards poured into a piscina, called *lavatorium*—"a lavatory." He used afterwards to purify his fingers in a special vessel, which was emptied likewise into the piscina; perhaps he washed his hands at the piscina itself.

A vestige of this custom remains in the Pontifical Mass, when the Bishop, after the two ablutions, which are actually prescribed, washes his fingers in a basin brought to him at the Epistle corner. Innocent III, at the beginning of the same century—the thirteenth—ordered, priests to purify the chalice first of all with pure wine which, it appears, he ordered the deacon to drink. This was already the practice in religious Orders, as the *Customs* of the Abbey of Cluny and the *Uses* of Cîteaux prove. This corresponds to the first ablution now prescribed. The second, intended especially for the purification of the fingers, is actually done with wine and water over the chalice itself which has been used for the Holy Sacrifice. The priest likewise drinks this wine and water. Originally there was little uniformity in all these practices. Some priests even believed they might dispense with any ablution of the fingers other than the washing of the hands after Mass, which is still in vogue.

During both ablutions, Holy Church places on the lips of the priest two magnificent prayers. Here is the first, appointed for the purification of the chalice :

Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus, et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum.

Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth we may receive with a pure mind, that of a temporal gift it may become for us an eternal remedy.

This prayer is very ancient ; it is to be found, save for the added word *pura*, in the Leonine, Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries. The *Micrologus* also mentions it. It was a prayer, not for the ablutions, but after the communion of the whole congregation ; it is the Post-Communion of the Mass for Thursday in Passion Week. Some Missals seem to show that it was then recited by each of the faithful who approached the Holy Table.

At the present day only the priest recites it, and that under his breath, both in his own name and in that of all the communicants. Before Charlemagne's time it used to be said at the end of the Mass on Christmas night, according to the *Missale Gothicum*. "It appears," says Le Brun, "that according to the *Book of Hours* of Charles the Bald, in the ninth century, the faithful said this prayer after having communicated; as each one applied it to himself it was said in the singular; *Quod ore sumpsi, Domine, capiam*. It may also be found in the singular (*Quod ore sumpsi*) in a twelfth-century Missal of the abbey of Marchienne in the diocese of Arras, and in that of St. Vaast (Arras) of about the same time, perhaps because priests said this prayer privately, applying it to themselves individually." Through it we beg from God the grace of drawing from the Divine Food the necessary strength to surmount the frailties of our nature, so prone to evil. Many Post-Communions in the Roman Missal are identical in meaning with the *Quod ore sumpsimus*. The Dominican Missal has a slight variant; instead of the words *et de munere temporali* it reads: *ut de Corpore et sanguine Domini*, a gloss on *munere*. The Dominicans say *Amen* at the end of the prayer.

The second prayer, which accompanies the purification of the chalice and of the priest's fingers, is thus worded:

Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi, et Sanguis, quem potavi, adhæreat visceribus meis: et præsta ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt sacramenta, qui vivis et regnas in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood, which I have drunk, cleave to my heart; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been fed with pure and holy Sacraments, who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

This prayer is taken from a Post-Communion in an ancient Gothic Missal anterior to Charlemagne's time.

The priest can, properly speaking, recite it only for himself, since Communion under both kinds has become his exclusive privilege.

The old books do not contain this prayer: the *Micrologus* does not mention it. The Roman Church, therefore, did not say it at that time; she was not fond of individual prayers, and in addition this one is addressed directly to Christ; the practice at Rome was rather to address the Father through Christ. But it is to be found in the *Missa Illyrici* and later in the *Ordo Romanus XIV*. It is taken from a very ancient *Missale Gothicum*, and it may be found in developed form in old liturgical books. This prayer was one of thanksgiving for those who had received under both kinds. Only gradually did it become the prayer for the second ablution. The priest asks God that the virtue of the sacrament may cleave to his inmost soul, that is his memory, his understanding, his will. As it clearly appears, both these prayers are prayers of thanksgiving.

In certain eleventh-century manuscripts in place of the *Quod ore sumpsimus* this wonderful invocation is prescribed: *Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis*, repeated three times; or those same words once to which is to be added: *Tibi laus, tibi gloria, tibi gratiarum actio in sæcula sæculorum, Amen, o beata Trinitas.*[1] What practical theology!

The Communion Antiphon.

As soon as the priest has purified the chalice, he hands it to the subdeacon, who wipes it and then covers it with the veil and burse. In the meantime the celebrant reads at the Epistle side the antiphon called the *Communion*.

[1] To Thee be praise, to Thee be glory, to Thee be thanksgiving for ever and ever, Amen, O Blessed Trinity.

This antiphon, mentioned by St. Augustine — generally a verse from a Psalm—was until the eleventh century sung during the distribution of Holy Communion ; whence its name. It was followed by the Psalm from which it is taken. The distribution being ended, the cantor, at a sign from a subdeacon, intoned the *Gloria Patri*, after which the antiphon was repeated.

Since the eleventh century the Psalm and *Gloria* have disappeared, the antiphon alone being sung, and that after the Communion of the faithful. This has occurred because actually people tend to go to communion at Low Mass or because at High Mass the communion is postponed until after the Mass is over. In addition when the *Agnus Dei* was farced it lasted a considerable time, and overlapped the Communion. The Communion antiphon has thus assumed the character of a hymn of thanksgiving ; hence it is usually of a joyous strain. It proposes prayerful thoughts to the mind while the celebrant is taking the ablutions. Nowadays, when daily communion has been revived and so highly recommended, it might be desirable to return to the original use of the communion anthem with its psalm. These psalms are very little known now and yet our forebears found in them the purest sweetness of devotion.[1]

The Post-Communion.

The priest goes to the centre of the altar, kisses it, and turning towards the people, says : " *Dominus vobiscum*— The Lord be with you." He returns to the book, and therein reads the prayer called *Post-Communion*, because

[1] Notice the Communion antiphons for the ferial days of Lent : they are taken from the psalms in order, except on Thursdays which became " liturgical days " only in the eighth century, and the Sundays which belong to another series.

it follows the Communion. The oldest liturgical books sometimes call it the *Complenda*, or *Oratio ad complendum* (finishing prayer), because it is actually with it that the Mass ends. It is called *post-communionem* in the Gelasian and Gallican Sacramentaries. It is specially intended to thank God for the graces received through the virtue of the Holy Sacrifice and of the sacrament of the Eucharist, and to beg Him to cause their salutary influence to abide in our souls.

There are always the same number of prayers at the Post-Communion as at the Collect and the Secret of the Mass.

Amalarius calls it the last blessing, *ultima benedictio*, and *ulterior benedictio*, final blessing, the prayer which is said after it in Lent, "over the people."

On ferial days in Lent there is recited immediately after the Post-Communion another prayer called *Oratio super populum* (the prayer over the people). This prayer in Solemn Mass is introduced by a general invitation to pray with the priest. The deacon, whose office it always is to invite the faithful to pray in common, calls aloud: "*Humiliate capita vestra Deo*—Bow down your heads before God." This prayer has no connection with the Post-Communion. Instead of *Humiliate*, etc., bow down your head, *inclinate*, bow yourselves, used to be said; this last expression suggested the bowing of the head which is still done as a sign of humility. The very first *Oratio super populum*, that of Ash Wednesday, begins with the words *Inclinantes se*. Perhaps it was this expression which originated the practice of bowing at these prayers. Moreover the liturgy generally requires this humble bowing of the head whenever God's blessing is asked.

The *Oratio super populum*, as the ancient Sacramentaries testify, until St. Gregory the Great's time, was said

during the whole year, even during Paschal time and on solemn feasts. According to John the Deacon this pope decreased the number of prayers at Mass; perhaps it was he also who restricted to Lent the use of this prayer which usually asks God's mercy and protection. From this restricted use an idea of penance was added to the recitation of this prayer: accordingly, it has been reserved for Masses in Lent, with the exception of Mass on Sunday, a day on which penance relaxes something of its severity, and the genuflexions and bowing attached to this prayer were forbidden.

The Post-Communion on the other hand is a prayer of thanksgiving; the *Oratio super populum* is the last blessing. It seems, in fact, to have been the original conclusion to the whole Mass. And, according to Amalarius, to say the Post-Communion is to bless the people before dismissing them. The blessing which nowadays follows the *Ite Missa est* was not then in existence.

We ought to have a devotion to the Post-Communion of the day. This thanksgiving, made as it is by the voice of the Church in the name of Jesus Christ who at this moment is present within us, surely does not call on heaven in vain. And what a wonderful doctrinal epitome of the Eucharistic mystery is contained in these prayers! The more ancient among them, like the rest of the liturgical formulæ, are very terse but full of the finest theology. The general theme of these prayers reminds us that the Eucharist is the Gift of Life.

The Ite Missa est.

Down to the ninth century and even during Lent, as the eighth-century *Ordo Romanus I* shows, the *Ite Missa est*, which follows the Post-Communion, ended the Mass. The prayers which follow—that is, the *Placeat*, the

Blessing, and the *Last Gospel*—have been added only by degrees to the Liturgy.

What is the origin of the *Ite Missa est*, and when is it said? These three words are commonly translated, "Go; the Mass is said." They really mean, "Go; it is the dismissal"—that is, "You may now withdraw." The Greeks call this dismissal *apolysin*, from a Greek word which designates this action.

The Fathers, as early as the fourth century, mention the dismissal of the congregation. There were various forms in East and West. With the Greeks the deacon proclaims to the people: *In pace procedamus*, "Let us go forth in peace," and the people answer him: *In nomine Domini, Amen.* "In the name of the Lord." And when the priest has blessed the congregation and the distribution of the *Eulogia* has taken place the Dismissal is sung. It varies with the day, but the most common form is: "Glory to Thee, Christ our God, our hope, glory to Thee!" The *Apostolic Constitutions* contains the form: *Ite in pace*, "Go in peace!" The oldest *Ordines Romani* (*I, II, III*) have our present *Ite Missa est* with the congregation's *Deo Gratias*. It was used invariably in the West until the interpretation of the *Ite Missa est* underwent a rather curious evolution. The general rule formerly was to proclaim the *Ite Missa est* on days when there was a large congregation. It was then sung not only on all Sundays of the year, but also on feast days, from Septuagesima until Easter, and even on ferial days in Lent, precisely because on those days the faithful, more fervent then than nowadays, were accustomed to assist in great numbers at the Holy Sacrifice.

Later, and by a very natural transposition, the *Ite Missa est*—this "sign of full churches"—was regarded as an invitation to rejoice. It was made, as it were, a distant

echo of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, and was therefore heard only on days when that hymn had been sung; for that reason it was, and is still, omitted on Sundays in Advent and from Septuagesima until Easter, on which days there is no *Gloria in excelsis*. But, as an exception to the rule, it used at one time to be omitted also from the Midnight Mass for Christmas, because, since *Lauds* were to be sung immediately after, it was not fitting just then to dismiss the congregation.

According to our present rubrics, when the *Ite Missa est* is not said it is replaced by either *Benedicamus Domino*—"Let us bless the Lord," or *Requiescant in Pace*—"May they rest in peace."[1] Thus, by a coincidence so happy that it deserved to be intentional, we find that the words of dismissal are not pronounced whenever there is a liturgical reason why the people should not at once depart. Mass for the Dead is, in fact, followed by the Absolution. As regards the days of Advent and Lent, the Ember days and Vigils, they are days of penance, on which it is fitting that the people should be urged to remain in prayer and recollection. Undoubtedly it could not be said that inversely, the absence of the *dismissal* is necessarily a sign of mourning or penance; for example, such is not the case on ordinary ferial days, when the Church celebrates the Mass of the season or some votive Mass without the *Gloria in Excelsis*. There is established, however, a liturgical rule to the effect that the *Ite Missa est* is an invitation to spiritual joy, while the opposite sentiment, however slight it may be, excludes the *Ite Missa est*.

In Solemn Mass it is the deacon's place to announce this

[1] The *Requiescant in Pace* seems to be an abbreviation of the long prayer, "*Fidelium animæ per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace*—May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace."

dismissal; he, however, speaks on the part of the priest. *Ordo Romanus I* mentions that the deacon cannot pronounce it before he has the Pontiff's order to do so and that he is to look towards him to ask his assent. At Verdun a touching ceremony was observed in olden times: the deacon, on his knees, received from the priest the *Ite Missa est*, kissed his chasuble and answered, *Deo Gratias;* he then rose up, and, turning towards the people, sang *Ite Missa est.* In order to show that the deacon is only the mouthpiece of the priest, the latter stands facing the people during the singing of this formula (*cf.* Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. x, p. 440).

The two forms *Benedicamus Domino* and *Requiescant in Pace*, being prayers, and not words addressed to the congregation, are sung by the deacon facing the altar.

To the *Ite Missa est* and *Benedicamus Domino* is answered *Deo Gratias.* This is the natural conclusion to the great mystery which has just been accomplished, and nothing can better end this sublime Action than a cry of thanksgiving unto God. To *Requiescant in Pace* is answered *Amen.* This expressive word ratifies the prayer offered by the priest on behalf of the departed.

The Placeat.

The preceding *Deo gratias* formed the end of the liturgical rite in early times; it should be no cause for astonishment, therefore, if neither the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries nor the oldest of *Ordines Romani* do not mention the *Placeat*, the Blessing and the Last Gospel. These are recent introductions; they may be considered as a continuation of the thanksgiving.

The *Placeat* is to be found in the Mass of *Illyricus*, in Ratoldus of Corbie and other Missals written in the tenth century. The *Micrologus* mentions it at this point

of the Mass, and from the end of the eleventh century it was in use in Rome. Until the sixteenth century Missals prescribe that this prayer is said as Mass is finishing or after Mass is over. In fact this prayer was a thanksgiving performed formerly by the priest in private after Mass, and the people had no part in it. Hence its individual character and the private way in which it is said. Until the sixteenth century it was not considered as an integral part of the Liturgy. St. Pius V inserted it definitively in the Ordinary of the Mass. The *Placeat* well deserves this position of honour. Recalling in a very striking way the prayer of the oblation, *Suscipe Sancte Pater*, it forms an admirable epilogue to the Holy Mass, being a very forcible and pregnant prayer in which the priest speaks in his own name, yet on behalf of all, and in which he sums up all his intentions, and recapitulates the four ends of sacrifice—namely, adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation, and supplication. It is as follows :

Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas, obsequium servitutis meæ, et præsta ut sacrificium, quod oculis tuæ Majestatis indignus obtuli, tibi sit acceptabile, mihique et omnibus pro quibus illud obtuli, sit, te miserante, propitiabile. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Let the performance of my homage be pleasing to Thee, O Holy Trinity; and grant that the sacrifice which I, though unworthy, have offered up in the sight of Thy Majesty, may be acceptable to Thee, and through Thy mercy be a propitiation for me, and all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The priest, for the last time, kisses the altar. He seems to do so solely out of love and respect for Christ, whom the altar represents, just as he did when he ascended to the altar at the beginning of the Holy Sacrifice (*Collationes Brugenses*). It is thus the minister takes leave of Him, whom he has represented in the priesthood, whom he has received and whom he has distributed to others in

the Sacrament. At the end of the *Placeat* he seals by this kiss the petitions which are made in the prayer; and although he is preparing for the blessing which follows and transfers to it, so to say, the heavenly gifts which he draws from Jesus Christ, this kiss is never omitted even at *Requiem* Masses at which no blessing is given.

The Blessing.

In the *Ordines Romani I, II* and *III* may be found mention of a blessing given by the Pontiff on his way back to the sacristy to those bishops and priests who ask for it, but there is nothing about the solemn blessing nowadays in use. Liturgists of the ninth century are also silent on the point. About the tenth and eleventh centuries bishops blessed the congregation; until this time a solemn blessing was given between the *Pater noster* and the Communion, as we mentioned above. In the end the custom was copied at Rome. After the thirteenth century bishops gave the blessing with the formula that is still used nowadays: *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*, etc. . . . *Adjutorium nostrum*, etc. . . . *Benedicat vos omnipotens*, etc. . . . *Ordo Romanus XIV* shows that he did not say the *Placeat* until after this blessing.

There is no document authorizing us to believe that, before the eleventh century, a simple priest blessed the faithful at the end of Mass; this was a solemn act reserved to the Bishop. In fact, as the *Micrologus* observes, about the date mentioned above, priests began to bless the people at the end of Mass, but only with permission of the Bishop. Gradually the present custom was established, especially when the blessing before Communion disappeared. As regards the formula employed, it was not always the same. The blessing in the Dominican rite is always: *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti descendat*

super vos et maneat semper. "May the blessing of Almighty God . . . come down upon and remain with you always." Some priests used the solemn form, now reserved to Bishops and Prelates; others were satisfied with the following:

Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus ✠ Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus.
R. Amen.

May Almighty God, ✠ the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you.
R. Amen.

This is the form in use to-day. It seems that originally only the Bishop might bless the people with his hand, the simple priest using for that purpose the paten. Some priests made three signs of the Cross when pronouncing the names of the Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity; others contented themselves with only one. St. Pius V prescribed three signs at solemn Mass; but Clement VIII allowed only one sign of the Cross, and prescribed that the blessing should be said in a low voice to indicate that it is bishops alone who have right to bless the people.

The priest kisses the altar before he gives the Benediction, as if desirous to borrow from Christ the blessing to be bestowed upon the people; he next raises his hands to Heaven to draw down, as it were, the grace of God, turns towards the people, and then, while making the sign of the Cross over them, pronounces the formula quoted above.

We should highly value this blessing, given us on behalf of Our Lord; it is intended to confirm in us the graces of the Holy Sacrifice.

The Last Gospel.

There now only remains to say a few words about the Last Gospel, which is generally that of St. John: "*In principio erat Verbum*—In the beginning was the Word," which forms the proper Gospel of the third Mass for

Christmas day. Neither the Sacramentaries, the old *Ordines Romani*, the *Uses* of Cîteaux, the *Customs* of Cluny nor any Missals anterior to the thirteenth century mention this reading at the holy Sacrifice. After that date priests recited it out of piety when beginning their thanksgiving ; others said it as they took off their vestments, or on their way back to the sacristy ; there were some who said it at the altar, but in a low voice, later it was said aloud to satisfy the devotion of the people, especially of women, as appears from Missals of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Finally in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries popular piety practically compelled priests to say it at the altar, and thus the custom became general. This Gospel has always been regarded by the faithful as an object of very special veneration. Its mysterious verses used to be read over the newly baptized ; and they are still read in country places during a thunderstorm. The faithful were so anxious to have the first page of St. John said after the Holy Sacrifice that certain foundation Masses expressly mention its public recitation among the conditions to be fulfilled. It is once more the Pope, St. Pius V, who is responsible for making its recitation both obligatory and uniform. For in some places, instead of this Gospel, that from the votive Mass of Our Lady, *Loquente Jesu ad turbas*, was occasionally used. St. John's Gospel, so wonderfully deep, is like an epitome of the principal mysteries of our Faith. St. Augustine recounts the devotion of one who would write it in letters of gold in every church. We kneel at the words, "*Et Verbum caro factum est*—And the Word was made flesh," to worship the Word in His ineffable abasement in becoming Man.

Initium Sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem.	The commencement of the holy Gospel according to St. John.
R. Gloria tibi, Domine.	*R.* Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt: et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est: in ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum; et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men ; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes. Hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non erat ille lux, sed ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine. Erat lux vera, quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light ; that all men might believe through him. He was not the Light ; but was to bear witness of the Light. That was the true Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.

In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est, et mundus eum non cognovit. In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt. Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri, his, qui credunt in nomine ejus : qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt. Et VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST, *et habitavit in nobis ; et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiæ et veritatis.*

He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to be made the sons of God ; to them that believe in His Name ; who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt amongst us ; and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

R. Deo gratias.

R. Thanks be to God.

Sometimes it happens that at the end of Mass the priest recites some other Gospel than that of St. John. This is the case when two Masses being in concurrence, the more solemn one, which has prevailed over the more simple, borrows, nevertheless, the Gospel of the latter and adopts it for its final reading.

At the end of the Last Gospel is answered *Deo Gratias*

("Thanks be to God"). A feeling of profound gratitude to God is the sentiment that ought to animate our souls at taking leave of such august mysteries. It only remains for us to profit fully from the graces and teaching that God's munificence showers upon us; and the best act of thanksgiving that we can offer Him is to lead a life in conformity with the teachings that the *commemoration of Jesus Crucified leaves with us.*

How magnificent a Liturgy is this, which detaches us from earth and brings us so close to Heaven and the Holy of Holies![1]

"Do this for a Commemoration of Me"
(St. Luke xxii. 19).

[1] *Low Mass* being finished, the priest recites certain prayers ordered by Leo XIII and Pius X. It must be observed that they should *immediately* follow the Last Gospel; further distribution of Holy Communion, and all other prayers or devotions must be put off till after. (Sacred Congregation of Rites, November 23, 1887.) These prayers may be said in the vulgar tongue (*cf.* Callewaert, *Collationes Brugenses*, vol. xiii, p. 705). These prayers should be omitted at a votive Low Mass of the Sacred Heart on the first Friday of the month; this Mass has the privileges of a solemn votive Mass *pro re gravi* (S.C.R. June 8, 1911). A later decree permits a like omission when Low Mass is celebrated with some solemnity (as on the occasion of a first Communion, a general Communion, a Confirmation, when Orders are conferred, or a marriage celebrated), and also when, if the celebrant does not leave the altar, Mass is followed *immediately* by some sacred function or devotional exercise of some importance (S.C.R. June 20, 1913).

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